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Christ: His nature and work

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CHRIST:

HIS NATURE AND WORK

A SERIES OF DISCOURSES BY

HOWARD CROSBY, HENRY W. BELLOWS, CYRUS D. FOSS, THOMAS ARMITAGE,
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

THE present volume is planned to be the first of a Series of PULPIT TEACHINGS of representative Protestant preachers on themes connected with Christian doctrine.

The contributors to it are, with one exception, pastors of New York City churches, but in the event of our receiving from the public the requisite encouragement for the continuation of the Series, it is our purpose with future volumes to extend the territory from which contributions will be requested, as well as the range of the subjects to which the volumes will be devoted.

The discourses delivered from week to week in our churches contain much valuable thought which the hearers would be glad to have preserved in permanent form, and which in such form would prove of service also to many of the community whom all preachers would gladly influence, but who cannot, as a rule, be reached from the pulpit.

We have endeavored to obtain the co-operation of teachers who are fairly representatives of the thought and status of their several denominations, and we have looked to each contributor to select for use in the Series such one of his discourses as was as far as possible representative of his own opinions and position.

It is believed that this volume, and a series made up of similar volumes, presenting from different points of view the current Protestant opinions of the day on themes of essential importance, cannot but possess an exceptional interest and value, and will form a unique contribution to the theological and religious literature of the time.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS.

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GOD EVER ACTIVE IN CHRIST.

BY HOWARD CROSBY, D. D.

John V. 17. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Herbert Spencer is right, as judging from the position of the natural heart, when he says that God is unknowable. The Bible announced that truth 1800 years before Herbert Spencer. It announces it repeatedly. "No man hath seen God at any time." "No man knoweth the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." "He dwelleth in the light which no man can approach to—whom no man hath seen or can see." Herbert Spencer is right, as against all those who would see God and know him through the exploits of science and philosophy. He sweeps away all the webs that have been woven by Stoics or Epicureans or Spiritualistic dreamers or Poets, in short all that has been projected of God from the human mind. He is perfectly right in this, and let us thank him

for doing this service for the truth. But Herbert Spencer has not considered that that which is unknowable to the natural man may be made known to the spiritual man by a divine way, that new powers may be given to the soul fitted to new manifestations of the Deity, and he has ignored the fact which, as a scientific thinker, he ought to have noted, that millions have shown at least the strongest presumptive proof that they have known God. God has come down to us in Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit has fitted us to see the Son and, in the Son, the Father. This happy experience of the humblest of God's saints is a transcendental and meaningless statement to Herbert Spencer. The vision of Moses at Sinai was a declaration of the two facts that God is unknowable, and yet that he can reveal himself to his people. God there said to Moses "Thou canst not see my face ; for there shall no man see me and live. * * Behold there is a place by me and thou shalt stand upon a rock, and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by ; and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts (or extremities) ; but my face shall not be seen." Human invention cannot reach God. " Who, by searching, can find out

God?" But God can, in his mercy and power, so cause man and himself to approach one another as that man may know what was otherwise unknowable, and see the extremities or outer edges of God himself. This is done, as we have seen, by a double act; the incarnation of the Son of God, bringing God down, and the bestowment of the Holy Ghost, lifting man up. Of all this Herbert Spencer knows nothing. There is something higher and truer than metaphysics. A revelation from heaven poured down upon earth amid years of overwhelming evidences, and supported by the attestations of lives and experiences innumerable has been refused and despised by these weak materialists, who try to take care of themselves and do without a God, the humility that would not know God being really a foolish pride that would exalt self.

The heart taught by the Holy Spirit loves to visit and study God in the person of Jesus Christ. The wisdom, strength, purity, love and compassion of God are all made visible and comprehensible in Jesus. We are attracted and not overawed. God has a human aspect, and human character. He leaves the abstract, and we hear, see, look upon and handle the Word of life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. We have now *fellow-*

ship with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ. The fatal error of the Jews was their refusal to accept this fellowship—their denial of the Father in the Son. Hence they have been staggering these eighteen centuries in the darkness of despair, all their own Scriptures testifying against them. The words of our text were uttered to these unbelieving and fanatical Jews, who reviled our Lord, because he had healed the cripple at Bethesda on the Sabbath day. In their low carnality they saw nothing in their religion but ritual and regimen, and interpreted Scripture by this low standard. They asserted that abstinence from work on the Sabbath included every activity but such as belonged to the ceremonial services, and so, for a sick man to seek healing on the Sabbath was an infringement of the Commandment. So wild were they in their fanatical rage in this case, that they sought to destroy Jesus, who had performed the cure. Jesus' reply was our text, which only exasperated them the more, as it implied his equality with God. It certainly *does*. He associates himself with the Father as no created being could dare to do. And so it is all through the New Testament, when Christ speaks, or when his apostles speak; God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are spoken of as only an eternal

oneness would warrant, just as we see at last the Lamb in the midst of the Supreme Throne.

When Jesus said "My father worketh hitherto and I work," he showed that God's resting from the physical creation was not to be associated with ideas of fatigue and exhaustion, but rather a testimony to the value of the spiritual over the material. God's creation of the material universe can be marked in time, but his activity in the spiritual spheres of being and in the physical world as connected with and guided by spiritual forces has no limit whatever. The Sabbath therefore represents retirement from the lower to the higher life, and not idleness or sleep, the results of the dominancy of the lower life. The *rest* of the Sabbath is not physical rest, but rest from the lower applications of the energies. This the Jews could not understand, and so they rebuked our Lord for healing on the Sabbath, counting such a holy exercise of love and compassion a work that dishallowed the sacred day. They should have seen, first, that if physical rest was the meaning of the Sabbath, their literal construction should logically forbid the lifting of a finger, or the taking of a single step with the foot; and, secondly, that that which constituted "work" in the Sabbatic law, was to be measured and defined from the

spiritual side. When God ceased creating and making, he did not cease working. He became no Hindoo *Brahm*. His activity has never ceased and *can* never cease. It knows no Sabbatism, and in the nature of the case can have no Sabbatism. The Sabbatism has relation only to earthly ends. Says the Saviour "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." It was as much as to say to the Jews "All the holy influences of God are in perpetual operation; his grace is ever achieving its conquests; and all who are connected with his purposes of mercy will continue to engage actively in the holy work of love without any Sabbatic limitation affecting them." Now while this high definition of the Sabbath appears to be the primal intent of this saying of Jesus, yet the incessant working of the Son in conjunction with the father is a truth very prominent in the words, and to this thought we may profitably direct our minds as in itself full of suggestion, without relation to its application to Sabbath observance.

With God unseen by the natural eye and even inconceivable to the mind in his essentiality, and with his Son, who is his expression and image (*χαρακτηρ*—Heb. 1. 3. *εικῶν*—2 Cor. 4. 4) though once seen, now hidden from view, it is not a ready thought that

the Infinite One is, in and by the Son, just as active for us as when the solemn scenes of Gethsemane and Golgotha were enacting. We are prone to suppose that there is now a time of were waiting, an interval in which nothing is doing, and the next great day of action will be the judgment day. But the love of God is never dormant, and if his love is not dormant, how can his energy for us be dormant? It is true now as when Christ spoke it to the Jews—his Father is working up to this day and Christ is working too. We have but little idea of the spiritual world. But we know that there are tremendous agencies of evil at work, agencies that show themselves in such facts as the entrance of 2000 demons into one man, and the racking of men's bodies by diabolic forces,—agencies whose leader and guide is called again and again by our Lord "the prince of this world"—agencies that can, through the body, (and perhaps without its aid), tempt the mind to falsehood, and the heart to crime. The word of God also assures us that the strife caused by these evil powers is prosecuted in the unseen world, that oppositions and thwartings are permitted for some wise reason there. Where the veil has been drawn aside we have seen that the other world is all activity between the powers of good and the powers of evil.

This is what the books of Job, Daniel and the Revelation clearly teach us. It is not all contention here and all quiet there. There is a vast war still in progress in the wide universe of God, and chief in all the activity is the Son of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His increasing energy is exercised in behalf of his redeemed. He ever liveth to make intercession for them. This implies a constant activity for them against their accuser, an assumption of their cause in all its mysterious necessities. We know the result. It is salvation and eternal glory for them,—but we know very little of the means by which this result is acquired. We see a part here in the incarnation and sacrifice, but what do we know of the profound meaning of that word “intercession?” What are the relations between God and the “principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this world and the wicked spirits in heavenly places”? What was the contention of Michael the archangel with the devil? What was the twenty-one day hindrance of the holy one on his way to Daniel, when Michael came to his help? We catch but glimpses of that wonderful world beyond the sense, and doubtless could not understand it if we should see more of it, and so we are not tantalized and perplexed with further visions

of it. But we see enough to know that processes are going on, forces are organized and in conflict, progress is made, connections between heaven and earth are continuous, in all which prayer is a constant element and the Lord Jesus Christ is the Defender and Saviour of his people.

While we may not detail his continual working in the spiritual realm, we may know it is all an *intercession* (Rom. 8. 34. compared with ver. 26. where the spirit does the same in *us* that Christ does in *heaven*.) He is interfering in our behalf (*ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*), meeting the necessities of the case, just as he met part of those necessities at Calvary. The old ritual betokened this. There was not only sacrifice, but the appearing of the High Priest with the blood of the sacrifice in the holy of holies, into which the rest could not look. May not the very length of time before Christ came in the flesh be an indication that God's grace in Christ has other spheres of activity than this world, and to that fact may we not attribute the delay of the final consummation? May not the fulness of time in each case refer to things heavenly as well as things earthly? We cannot appeal against this to God's almightiness, for God works in nature by laws and plans and through long times, and why may he not

work in the spiritual world or spiritual life also by plans and laws and through long times? But besides this constant working of the Father and the Son in the unseen world, we are daily beholding the movements of grace upon earth which we must refer to the same divine source. Whether diseased bodies or diseased souls are healed, beyond all secondary laws where science has its field, we recognize Him who created and who upholds all things by His Son. It is He "who forgiveth all thine iniquities and who healeth all thy diseases." The working of nature implies the working of the Divine hand. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without God. Whenever the Divine power touches these visible things, it is the Son, who "upholds all things by the word of his power," "in whom is Life," "by whom all things consist," the very same who is Head of the Church. There is a demoniacal power ever working upon the earth, but by its side and superior to it is a divine power in constant exercise and that is Christ, whose presence with his people has never been removed. "I am with you always" is said by Him, when removing his visible body from the sight of men. In this conflict of demoniacal and divine powers upon earth, the latter uses the former for its own holy purposes allowing Satanic agencies to act

only so far as infinite wisdom decides. Over against Satan's desire to sift is the Son praying to the Father. Over against the strong man aroused is the stronger than he, the Overcomer, who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

The eye of faith thus sees the ever-active Christ working to-day with the same love and the same power and the same aim with which he worked when the eye of sense saw him in Galilee at Judea ; and the heart of faith is cheered and comforted beyond all expression when it thus recognizes Jesus Christ the same yesterday to-day and forever. It was necessary that the Jesus of Nazareth should go away in order that the Church should understand this more intimate and universal presence of the Lord. The eye of faith could not be exercised when the eye of sense had such an absorbing object, and the grander truth was lost by reason of the lesser. Not only in all the evangelistic efforts of the Church of God, but in every individual spirit-growth with all its attached temporal circumstances, the Son of God is working in every detail, and he who sees the Son sees the Father. When the soul is accustomed to this sublime view of an ever-present, ever-energizing Saviour, it has conquered the world ; it is no longer a pensioner on its bounty, or a slave to its whims.

It lives in a sphere where the world's forces are all cancelled. This is the secret place of the Most High—this the pavilion where God loves to hide his own. This is where martyrs and sufferers of all kinds have found a triumph over all their sufferings, in the presence of a working Christ.

THE SACRIFICIAL ELEMENT IN CHRISTIANITY;

ITS ORIGIN, WORTH AND PRESENT SIGNIFICANCE.

BY HENRY W. BELLOWS, D. D.

For if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then, we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not look at that which is abolished:

II. Cor. II, 12, 13.

I propose, in the following discourse, to examine in a candid manner, the origin, worth and present significance of the sacrificial element in Christianity. What this element is, you mostly know. According to the wide-spread and prevailing theology of Christendom, the chief service which our Saviour has done the world, has been that of becoming the literal sacrifice for, and substitute of, our sins—suffering the pains and penalties of our offences—expiating the guilt of the world, and propitiating the favor of a justly angry God. According to this idea, all the penitence for sin, which the sincerest sorrow and reform could attest, would, without Christ's sacrifice have been utterly in vain. A broken law had to be vindicated; the wrath of a

just and holy God to be appeased, before there was any place for repentance. The sins of the world, according to this theory, had so interrupted, or rather so entirely closed the relations between the Almighty Sovereign and his earthly subjects, that a condition of non-intercourse existed. Mankind were in a state of rebellion. They had no representative at the divine court. They were in no condition to offer, had they been so disposed, any terms of peace ; nor had they in their spiritual beggary any thing wherewith to propitiate the insulted majesty of heaven even had they known and felt the horror of their situation ; their case was absolutely hopeless. They had forfeited the sole and explicit condition of God's favor, by their disobedience to the law. All their penitence for the past, and all the future obedience they could exhibit, could do nothing to remove the curse that rested on their heads.

In this desperate state of things, Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the equal with the Father, resolves to offer himself, a sacrifice to the vengeance of the law ; to assume, as upon this theory, his infinite nature enabled him to do, the guilt of all men ; to suffer in his own person, the penalty of all the sin ever committed ; to let the weight of the formal curse

utterly spend itself on his head, and thus render it possible for the Father—the majesty of the law being vindicated, and the threatening of God executed—to forgive sinners henceforth, on repentance and on acceptance of Christ as their sacrifice. Henceforth, men were, after confessing their sins and repenting of them, to plead the merits of Christ, as their justification. Against the curse of the law they were to hold up their Saviour's cross; against their debts to God, to point to their ransom in Christ.

It would be easy for me to point out the moral objections and practical abuses to which this substitutional view of sin is liable; easy to make it seem very offensive and very untenable; easy to secure your entire disapprobation and rejection of the theory; but that would not account for the interesting fact, that this theory has characteristically prevailed in the Christian world since Christ's day, and is now dear to millions of intelligent and excellent believers in the Gospel. You would gain nothing in the clearness of your own views; nor be able to hold them with any new conviction by any such cheap triumph, as either a philosophical or scriptural refutation of the popular sacrificial system. But if you can be made to see how naturally that

system has arisen ; how it has carried wrapped darkly within itself certain precious truths, which can now safely be trusted to an open and undisguised existence ; how in truth, it merely symbolized principles and realities, which can, in this later day, be looked at in their purer essence, you will then acquire, I think, a reasonable, calm and useful repossession of your own religious sentiments, with a larger charity towards those of others, and a better understanding of them.

If we can understand the origin and use of the sacrificial system under Moses, we shall see our way clearly through the case. We must bear in mind, with what slow and difficult steps, the real character of God had been unfolding itself in the world ; first, his absolute Being and overwhelming sovereignty ; next, his absolute justice and holiness ; lastly, his universal love and discriminating mercy towards individual souls. The worship of the world has necessarily followed in its forms, the history of its conceptions of God. He has been sought and propitiated in every age, by what had then been supposed to be most acceptable to him. During the era when His mere sovereignty was being established in men's minds, every thing that bore witness to men's sense of His power and authority, became an ele-

ment of worship. If we remember how barbarous monarchs are magnified by themselves and their subjects—how they surround themselves with insignia of cruelty, and rejoice in the display of absolute power—and how eager their subjects are to show subserviency by abject propitiations, by costly offerings and bloody sacrifices, we shall readily understand, how the earliest worship offered to the Gods, came to be, in all probability, human sacrifices. That cannibalism, which survives among the lowest races and most effete savages of the globe—in which their enemies are first killed in honor of their idols, and then eaten—is doubtless only the dying echo of a system which was once universal. Livingstone tells us that to this day, in the interior of Africa the funeral rites of a king are celebrated with the deliberate slaughter of a hundred of his own subjects. So natural is it for crude humanity to seek in cruelty, some fierce expression of its sense of love and submission. We seem to see in Abraham's readiness to slaughter Isaac, a remnant of the feeling that God was to be propitiated by human sacrifice. The disposition still shown among barbarians to gash themselves with knives, and do kindred acts of violence to their own persons and each other, in expression of their reverence for the unknown Be-

ing, indicates the depth of the original idea of God, as a Being jealous, vindictive, absolute—delighting that his subjects counted no pains or sufferings dear which would propitiate his favor. It would almost seem, as if the first idea of worship, conceived of God as most honored, by whatever most dishonored man; that every thing most repugnant and painful to human beings was to be self imposed, and set apart as specially grateful to God. In whatever way men could spite their own instincts, do violence to their own wishes and inclinations, by that way they sought to show their servility before the Infinite. Thus the worship of the serpent, the ape, the crocodile. The cruel, the painful, the ugly were the chief elements in the first worship of absolute power.

Moses found this system of things—more or less modified by experience and culture and philosophy—existing in Egypt and in all neighboring countries. A universal system of human sacrifices, had slowly improved itself into the sacrifice of beasts in the more advanced nations; but the Gods were everywhere approached with offerings of expiation and propitiation. They were considered great and glorious, according to the number of beasts slain in their honor. Originally cruelty, the inflaming sight

of blood, the exciting sense of suffering, formed, perhaps, the largest element in these offerings: for, the dull and unrefined feelings of our own crude humanity are stung into sensibility by nothing short of these coarse appeals. But a pain, less intense and more refining, has now to be substituted; the pain of surrendering what was valuable in itself, to the service of God. Costliness was to take the place of cruelty in the refining process. Sacrifices were to be measured not by the suffering, but by the loss that attended them. It was inevitable that this principle should gradually methodize itself into a system, until modified variously in different countries, a sacrificial ritual should become established, with stated offering at stated periods, and with a tariff of sacrifices—so to speak—adapted to the means of worshipers, and to the gradations of expiation and gratitude to be expressed. If it be asked, why the sacrifice of beasts, living things, should have been so generally prevalent, in place of offerings of jewels, gold, or oil and wine, the answer is, that if human sacrifices first prevailed, beasts came next in the order of dignity, and that, very likely, the sacrifice of life had a hold on the imagination, which could not be obtained by any thing less pungent. We know that offerings of coin, oil and

wine did gradually—as flocks and herds became less the form in which the wealth of the world existed—supplant the sacrifice of bulls and rams. But the hold that this system of sacrifices had on the world, is sufficiently proved by the fact that it descended even to the refined days of Greece and Rome.

Moses found this system, universally prevalent. He did not invent, much less intensify, or exaggerate it. On the contrary, he diminished, modified, refined and regulated it. To extinguish it was impossible. The best that could be done was to convert it to the use of the ends he had in view. God was to be revealed—not now as greater than all Gods—but as a God of holiness, an exacter of justice and truth; and the existing forms of the world's worship, were to be turned into a ritual, for the service of the true God. The multitudinous altars, were all to be merged in one altar. Sacrifices were no longer to be made by any body, any where, and with whatever indecent and outrageous rites a contagious orgasm and brutal fury might prompt; but at *stated* times and places, under precise regulations, and with conditions favorable to the refinement of the worshiper. Moreover, the sacrifices were now to have a definite and intelligible meaning assigned to them; and no circumstance could so surely have

provided for their ultimate disappearance, as this. Instead of representing vague fears and vast emotions; of giving expression to passionate and irregular feelings, they were now to have an explicit significance; to be connected with distinct purposes, and to have each and every one, a limited importance. This introduction of reason into a religious ritual is fatal to its stability, and indicates its temporary sway. It is only mystery that survives all arguments and outlasts all intellectual and moral progress, as the mystery of the Trinity may exemplify. No doubt the sacrificial system of the Jews had a highly educational influence. It was adapted to accomplish two things: first, in place of a vague and mysterious, to create a reasonable service; second, to give a gradual refinement and spirituality to a mode of worship universal among men; but nowhere else made moralising and instructive. Do you wonder that I say the Mosaic system of sacrifices was fitted to promote a reasonable service, in place of a vague and mysterious one? Was it reasonable to suppose that God could be moved and placated by the sacrifice of goats and oxen, or that the sins of men could be washed out in the blood of lambs and doves? It may not be reasonable for us; but at a time when the greatest need of the

world was to believe that God cared enough for men, to know or care even about their sins—when men, for the most part, thought that their virtues were about as offensive to God as their vices; that absolute authority and infinite caprice sat on the throne of the universe—it was an immense thing, to have them believe that God discriminated between right and wrong—to teach them to associate penalty with wrong-doing; to measure crimes by an external standard, and to believe that no caprice, or accident ruled the divine mind—but a positive law! It was an immense thing to have a fixed rule of intercourse with God; a way of cultivating right relations with him; of removing real or imaginary obstacles to his favor, and thus gradually of forming a definite and recognized intercourse with Him. There is nothing more fatal to the knowledge of God, than the absence of any recognized terms of intercourse between Him and His subjects and children. No matter whether it is the sense of insignificance, of ignorance, or of sin, which keeps men away; anything that makes men feel they cannot conceive God, or that they are not fit to come into his presence, is fatal to personal religion. Vast and vague and mystic conceptions of the supreme, push men into fatalism; destroy their self respect and

render practical faith and religious obedience impossible ; they drive the human soul either into despair or apathy—commonly into both. It is a great mistake, therefore, to suppose that the only object of the Jewish sacrificial system, was to mark God's dreadful indignation at sin ; it was quite as much to prevent the sense of sin from being an absolute barrier between man and Himself ; to educate the conscience without allowing it to become a terrible wall betwixt the sinner and his maker. Sin, therefore, was, by the Jewish system, made definite and tangible and thus, clearly apprehensible by the human conscience, and it was made removable by ritual acts, and, therefore, not left to be a ground of hopeless alienation. The system of sacrifices, converted into an expression of the penalties that attended wrong doing, and so made highly educating to the conscience, was likewise made a means of easy intercourse with the Almighty ; provision being made for lightening the conscience of its load, and enabling the sinner to begin anew with his efforts to please God. It corresponded, in this respect to the use of confession and absolution in the Catholic church, which for the masses of the ignorant and morally weak, have not been without their serviceableness. The immense advantage of this, will be

understood by comparing for a moment, the relations of a people to an absolute monarch, governing by unfixed principles, or worse, caprices, and their relations to a monarch governing by a constitution and fixed laws. There can be no true civilization under absolute or cruel laws. Neither the intelligence, the enterprise nor the virtue of a people can be developed under such a system; while mild, fixed and intelligible laws encourage sagacity, activity and confidence, and produce order, virtue and happiness. Thus the Mosaic ritual, in place of the capricious, vague and fatalistic religions which prevailed, with their unfixed, unknown and shifting ends and objects, presented a settled, legal, intelligible, though a formal and an external system of worship. If it looks stern, material, complex, from our Christian side of it, it looks mild, spiritual and simple from the other heathen side. We must consider what it supplanted to do it justice; and also what has now, by the grace of God, supplanted it.

The object, then, of the sacrificial system of the Jews was, first, to turn to use, modify and refine, the rude elements of expression, which in those ages, the worship of the Gods had every where, in obedience to the laws of human nature, taken on. Those elements were cruel, coarse and physical; but

they involved self denial and self sacrifice, by leading men to do, in honor of the Gods, what was most repugnant to their instincts of self preservation, and of property. Men marked their sense of the difference between the Gods and themselves, by reversing all their own feelings, when they attempted to think of them. Thus the worship of ugliness, of caprice, of cruelty arose in the world. God must be feared before he could be loved; must be obeyed before he could be understood; and the native elements and self chosen symbols of worship, the bloody alphabet, in which the heathens had stammered out their worship, had to be adopted by Moses, when he came to purify and enlighten the religion of the world. What he made this alphabet say, is what should measure our sense of his greatness. The ten commandments were worthy of a revelation! To provide for their observance and the education of the people in them, involved the machinery of the whole Mosaic system. And while the end is always exalted and noble and worthy of God, the means are on the level of the age, intended to meet the existing barbarism of society, and to encourage the usages and customs of the time. The Mosaic system, instead of being what it is commonly made out, the inauguration of the sacrificial

system, was the beginning of the end of it. It took that system (which begun in human sacrifice, and had become, by degrees, softened into a sacrifice, chiefly, of animals) and so regulated, restrained, humanized and diminished it; so interpreted and mixed in with it clean ideas and moral meaning, that it may be said to have been doomed to decay from its very origin! Like limiting the extension of slavery, as the best means of extinguishing it in the end, Moses limited the vague and vast system of sacrifices, as the best means of ultimately destroying it; and as the advocates of slavery saw that the education of the slave, was the inevitable rupture of his chains, and so discouraged it, so Moses saw that the moral and spiritual significance attributed to the sacrifices of the law, or the education of the system, was to be the irrepressible cause of its ultimate subsidence. You will also carry in your minds, the other main thought—that sacrifices were designed to give a sensible and emphatic popular expression of the ideas—

1. that God's service is costly, and not to be rendered without sacrifice of feeling and property.

2. That sin is his abhorrence; and to be either abolished or, at any rate, covered, before his favor can be expected or his presence sought.

3. That notwithstanding man's sinfulness and ill desert, there is a method by which God allows himself to be approached, propitiated and made friendly even to sinners.

These seem to me the three great ideas involved in the Jewish ritual, considered as a sacrificial system :

1. God's majesty and holiness, deserve and require costly recognition and obedience.

2. Man's sins are a perpetual disobedience and despite to God, and erect a mighty barrier between men and their Sovereign.

3. But God has graciously devised a method by which men may retain His favor, seek His presence and find His face. And that method is the costly confession and expiation of their sins, by a system of significant, educating sacrifices—a system which while it keeps the door to God's presence constantly open, is designed continually to mark and emphasize his hatred of sin.

That the picture-language or institutional hieroglyphics, in which these permanent and eternal truths were taught in the Mosaic ritual, was destined finally to give way to an enlightened spirit which no longer needed the symbol, is sufficiently obvious in the literature of the Jews, in which the strongest

expressions are found, at last, of the uselessness of all sacrifices of oxen, goats and rams, when made a substitute for the obedience of the heart. No more intelligent or spiritual appreciation of the inner meaning of the law is any where to be found, than in the writings of the prophets themselves. Those, however, who would have us believe that at the start, the Jews were expected to understand this spiritual significance; that formality was not inculcated deliberately; that they were not expected and permitted to substitute a legal for a moral purity, are greatly wanting in candor, and equally lacking in appreciation of the circumstances. Forms and substitutes and shadows of things to come, were deliberately made a part of the educational system of Mosaism. "Assume a virtue if you have it not," was one of the civilizing teachings of the law. If you are not penitent, you must at least express your sense of the need of penitence.

It becomes easy now to see how the ideas, language and symbolism of this sacrificial system have been passed over into the Gospel. The real wonder to me is not that it occupies a considerable place in the New Testament, but that it does not fill a far larger place, and color its whole language. The writers of that book were all Jews, educated in

the sacrificial system; the subject of the book was a Jew, and hence the very object of its prophecies and hopes. There was the most intimate relation therefore between the men of the old system and the men of the new; between the ideas of the old system and the ideas of the new. That Jesus Christ came to take the place of the old sacrificial system; that what it did for the Jews, He was henceforth to do for His disciples and the world, was a most true, and it was a most affecting and interesting idea. The sacrificial system of old, atoned for sin: that is, it opened a way to God's love and favor, in spite of sin; and this was just what Christ came to express and prove in a new and more affecting way: namely, the mercy of God, His love for His children in spite of their sins, His desire to have them come to Him and trust Him and believe in His love and mercy, independently of their merits and goodness. But this idea was to be made known to men, under circumstances, which while it revealed God in all His loveliness and mercy, should show sin in all its hatefulness; while it exhibited God as the friend and lover of sinners, should show Him as the hater of sin itself.

It is obvious then that the objects of the Mosaic and of the Christian systems were really identical,

and differed only in the way in which the same ideas were clothed and adapted to different stages of human want and character. In the law, God's justice stood in the shape of a stern and positive requirement of perfect obedience; His mercy in the shape of a sacrificial system, by which the way of His forgiveness and favor, was kept open in spite of human sins. In the Gospel, God's justice stands in the name of the absolute exactions of that eternal and changeless law of right, stamped on the conscience, irrepeatable and inviolable—His mercy, in the mission, character and whole work of Jesus Christ, whose end and object is the embodiment and illustration of the truth, that, while God's nature and holiness and will are forever demanding and enforcing a perfect moral and spiritual obedience, He all the while loves His sinful children; that while He hates their sins, he loves them; that while He cannot spare their sins, He spares them; that He will continue to bless and love them in spite of their sins, as a fresh means of melting them into obedience, and into the putting away of all rebellious and unholy dispositions.

There was nothing necessary to God in the sacrificial system of the Jews; it was purely for men's sake, not for His own, that a way was opened

through the sacrifices of oxen and goats. God's disposition or ability to forgive upon repentance was not in the least changed or affected. It was only made known and symbolically expressed. No change in God's mind or heart or government is ever possible. Successive revelations of Him, only gradually unfold a policy, a nature, a character which is eternal and unchangeable. There was nothing real, therefore, in the sacrificial or substitutional system of Judaism, except its educational tendencies. It expressed in the shape of promises and obligations, feelings and dispositions, originally and unalterably existing in the divine mind. As if a father said to his child, "my son, if you come to me and confess your fault and show the sincerity of your confession by some act of costliness, I shall forgive you and take you to my favor." Does the father's love for his child and readiness to forgive him depend upon this repentance and external indication of it, or does not the father (already dearly loving his child, and perhaps all the more on account of his blindness and folly) establish this means, and enter into this promise, for the sake of reforming the child, not for the sake of being able to feel an interest in him?

Still more is it true, that Christ's mission—His

life, teachings, death, were not in the least degree necessary to make God propitious to men, or to enable Him to forgive them, or to effect any change whatever in the changeless and ever perfect mind and all loving heart of God, but merely to express this forgiveness, this loving kindness and tender mercy in the most affecting and moving way, for the sake of his sinful, alienated and hapless offspring.

The sacrificial ritual of Moses, was the rhetoric of God's mercy, written in symbolic institutions ; the mission of Jesus Christ, was God's educational mercy incarnated in flesh and blood ; God's eternal word, spoken in the shape of a long devoted, self-immolated Elder Brother who gave Himself for us to bring us to God ; who lived and taught and died to persuade men of God's love and mercy, and to induce them to love and serve Him with all their minds and all their wills and all their hearts.

The wonder is not, under these circumstances, that a parallel should be seen in the New Testament, between Christ's sacrifice, and the sacrifices of the law ; that His blood should be compared with the blood of lambs and goats, or that the Christian world should have fastened on this parallel and endeavored out of it, to elaborate that complicated system, which has since obtained possession of

Christendom, but which we justly refuse to receive. The wonder is that the New Testament is not steeped in this language, instead of being singularly free from it. Nothing but Christ's entire superiority to the literalism of Judaism, His own exalted and perfect spirituality, accounts for the fact, that hardly a reference is made to the sacrificial system (except to condemn it) in the three first Gospels; that it is first referred to in any pointed way, by St. John, not till sixty years after Christ's ascension; that it is occasionally hinted at, and more seldom directly employed by the writers of the Epistles, and only carefully elaborated by an unknown writer, in an epistle exclusively intended for Jews in what is called, but is not, Paul's epistle to the Hebrews. Probably, but for this unauthentic epistle, the Christian Church would have escaped the dominion of this idea in some considerable degree.

I cannot think, however, that the sacrificial system, which has thus crept over into Christian theology, has been without its beneficial effects. It seems to me that the Christian world, in past ages, was just as incapable of understanding the simplicity of Christ's doctrine, as the Jews were of understanding the Ten Commandments, which, to produce any impression or obtain any influence, had to

be guarded by, and enforced in the whole mechanical system of the Mosaic ritual. I cannot help regarding the theological system of Christendom—its Trinitarian and its sacrificial theology—as the only machinery under which the perfectly simple, but exalted, and therefore, slowly appreciated idea of Jesus Christ could be symbolized and dramatised, and so worked into the dull mind of our race. I find in short, no more difficulty in seeing the simple and rational and scriptural ideas of the Gospel, through the theological and ecclesiastical clothes they have worn these eighteen centuries past, than in seeing the Gospel in the law of Moses, for it is there, if God, the unchangeable Father is there. Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity (which we utterly discard) is only a crude attempt to express the perfection of the Divine character. If you put God's justice in a being called the Father, and God's mercy in another being called the Son, and God's yearning towards humanity in another being called the Holy Spirit, you must, in order to get all these divine attributes back into one Being, declare these three persons to be one God. The broken rays of the light of God's countenance, are thus artificially brought together again. It may seem a sort of child's play, to say that God cannot do in one char-

acter, what He is able to do in another—that He cannot do as the Father, what He can do as the Son; but it is certainly better if His mercy is expressed only in Jesus Christ, to make Jesus Christ out to be God, than to deny mercy to be in God. And so with the atonement as popularly received. If men will not or cannot believe God willing to forgive sin, from the tenderness and mercy of His own character, then it is better they should have some way of believing it possible, even if they adopt the theory that He forgives it for the sake of Christ's blood. The grand thing is to believe it; and if this doctrine helps them they will continue to use it while they need it. We are able to discard Trinity and atonement, as not essential to our faith in the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel. We believe without difficulty in the Father's mercy, and so, are not driven to make Christ God, to find mercy in the Creator; and we believe in the eternal placability of our Father, and so need no faith in the placating efficacy of Christ's blood, to establish our confidence. What it becomes us to consider is, that our simple system of faith (which I believe is Christ's own) is, nevertheless, one which could not have prevailed earlier, but was inevitably dramatized and conveyed down to our later ages by the symbols and forms of the church universal. Let us not wonder at the

slowness of its progress, nor be impatient at what we call the errors, which are rather to be considered as the inevitable accommodations and ritualising of the simplicity of Christ. I think this view of the Mosaic system of sacrifices, and of the rhetorical echo it has found in the ecclesiastic and dogmatic life of Christendom, explains fully the language of the New Testament, vindicates the providence of God, shows the unchangeableness of His character and dispositions, increases our charity for other Christians by interpreting the natural and unavoidable existence of the current theology, while it substantially justifies and places on its solid foundations that rational system of faith, which sees nothing literal in the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, and nothing permanent in the common theory of the atonement: but believes and maintains that God was always both just and merciful! always ready to forgive the penitent; always the infinite lover of His offspring, and that Christ is the human image and incarnation of His perfect and unalterable tenderness towards His creatures.

THE FOUR GOSPELS ;

THEIR DIFFERENCES AND THEIR ESSENCE.

BY REV. CYRUS D. FOSS, D. D.

JOHN XX. 31.—“BUT THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD ; AND THAT, BELIEVING YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE THROUGH HIS NAME.”

The things referred to here are the signs spoken of in the previous verse: “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book.” These signs were the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus ; and were intended to produce faith in him as being the Messiah, the Son of God and the real Saviour of sinners. Beyond all question the *resurrection* of Jesus is the crucial fact on which the Scriptures rest the demonstration of the truth of Christianity. An

inspired Apostle, the most logical of them all, reasons about it on this wise: "If Christ be not raised your faith is vain, and our preaching vain; ye are yet in your sins; they also that have fallen asleep in Christ have perished." Thus the Scriptures rest upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ the whole system of Christianity. If that fails us there is no gospel and our faith is utterly vain. I may therefore without any straining of these words which constitute the text make them apply to the whole of the four Gospels,—the four records of the earthly life of Jesus Christ,—and may say that all these records are for the same purpose as the account of the resurrection, which is the seal and crown of the whole. So if Jesus' resurrection was intended to prove Him to be the Christ, the Son of God, and a life-giving Saviour, the same is true of the whole of the records given us by the four evangelists.

I desire now by the help of that Holy Ghost, whose presence and aid we all invoke, to lead your thoughts to a birds-eye view of the four Gospels, especially as they are illumined by what Pressensè impressively terms "the fifth Gospel"—that is the history of Christianity. And I shall strive to point out in the first place, the differences between the four Gospels and the characteristics of each; and then to make a

summary statement of the essence of their teaching concerning the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. First let us notice *the characteristic differences of the Four Gospels.*

The inquiry thus suggested leads us at the outset to ask ; Why *four* Gospels? Why more than one? Why did not God inspire some one of the four Evangelists to give us a complete biography of Jesus Christ ; of every word he uttered and of every act he performed? We should then have avoided the necessity of seeking for that minute and perfect harmony between the different records which has been the effort and the despair of all commentators. There is a question logically anterior to this, which we will consider for a moment ; what is the object of any Gospel? The answer is given us in the text. It is to produce faith without sight. It is to awaken in the minds of men a vivid conception of, and a firm belief in the Lord Jesus Christ whom the vast majority of the race have never seen, and will never see until the judgment day. Now so much as this is plain I am sure ; to bring about this result, it is best that the record or records should come through men. It is not the dry and splendid tight of the intellect alone that we want on this theme ; it is the warm light and vivid coloring of

truth incarnated, living, moving, and breathing before our eyes. God does not therefore write the Gospel on two tables of stone, as he did most fitly the law; but on "the fleshly tables of the heart." Nor do angelic scribes hand down a perfect biography of Jesus from the skies. No: human beings can best receive and be most profited by a Gospel which human minds have received, which human hearts have felt, which human hands have written, tingling as they wrote. So God has been pleased to reveal himself in this way.

But why more than one record? Because no one human mind can take in the whole Gospel, and, hence, no one mind can give it out. There are several sides to the life and character of Jesus Christ just as of any other man. If you wish to find out about John Wesley, you are not content to read Watson's brief memoir; nor the fuller records contained in Stevens' admirable "History of the Religious Movement of the Eighteenth Century, called Methodism;" nor the three portly volumes of Tyerman's most disenchanting yet wondrously enchanting biography. You read all these. You read also Wesley's journals, and his letters and his sermons and everything you can find that he has penned; and thus going about him on all sides, and

considering him under all circumstances, at last you find out the man.

I hold it to be a remarkable arrangement in the divine economy that we have several Gospels instead of one. I say "arrangement" for I cannot believe that He who watches the fall of every sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads, has left the number of records of the life and death and glorious resurrection of His only son to be the result of accident. Each of the Evangelists received such impressions concerning Christ as were adapted to his own nature and wants, and within the range of his capacity, and each reproduced his impressions in his narrative. I therefore like the titles "The Gospel according to St. Matthew" etc. It is what Matthew saw and felt of the Gospel, and so of the rest. And there was a difference. Some acts and words of Jesus especially arrested the attention of one of them; some, of another. Each records some things which all the others omit. Each omits some things which others record.

Note some of the things for which we are indebted to only a single one of the Evangelists. Matthew alone gives us in their completeness, the Sermon on the Mount, the Commission of the Apostles, the discourse concerning John, the de-

nunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees; and the parables of the tares, the hid treasure, the pearl, the draw net, the unmerciful servant, the laborers in the vineyard, the two sons, the marriage of the King's son, the talents and the ten virgins. Mark is to be credited with no considerable additional matter, (having given us but one parable unrecorded elsewhere, viz: the one illustrating the great law of spiritual growth "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear:") but he has numerous vivid descriptive touches, which serve the double purpose of making his narrative most real and life-like and of carrying conviction that he was an eye-witness: such as these; "There was no more room, no, not so much as about the door:"—"The blind man cast away his garments and leaped up and came to Jesus:" "He looked on them with anger;"—"He was looking around to see her that had done this thing:"—"Jesus sat over against the treasury." Luke alone gives us the parentage and birth of John the Baptist; the details of Jesus' birth; the hymns of Zacharias, the Virgin Mary and Simeon; the single recorded incident in Jesus' boyhood, and the most instructive statement that he was still "subject unto his parents," and that "he increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with

God and man ;” and the full narrative of the ascension, (Mark having only announced the fact.) He alone tells us of the widow at Nain, the ten lepers, the healing of the ear of Malchus, the two debtors, the good Samaritan, the friend at midnight, the intercession for the barren fig tree, the Pharisee and the publican, the rich man and Lazarus; of Jesus’ visit to the synagogue at Nazareth, of the ministering woman who accompanied our Lord through Galilee, of the first miraculous draught of fishes; and of the lost silver, the lost sheep and the lost son. John’s Gospel is freighted with more riches peculiar to itself than all the others put together. I cannot here even indicate, much less cite, a tithe of the unique treasures of this most wonderful Gospel. Its first utterance reveals its essence. It is preëminently the Gospel of the Word. It shows us not so much God working as God spoken. “As in the synoptical Gospels the Incarnate Son is mainly displayed to us in the operative majesty of outwardly-exercised omnipotence, so in the fourth Gospel he is mainly revealed to us in the majesty of conscious unity with the Eternal Father.” The very marked peculiarity of the biography of Jesus by his bosom-friend will be sufficiently suggested if we remember that it gives his discourses much the most fully; for ex-

ample, that on "the bread of life," the one to the woman at the well, and his valedictory address (filling three long chapters;) and still further, while the other Gospels account for less than two years of Christ's public ministry and that chiefly in Galilee, this shows us a ministry of about three years, a large part of it in or near Jerusalem.

Consider also the different characteristics of the four men and of their styles, and then tell me whether "these four holy pictures, painted by four loving hands, of him who was 'fairer than the sons of men,' were not given us that by varying our postures we might catch new beauties and fresh glories." Matthew was a tax-gatherer; chosen doubtless to that office because he had in some other occupation displayed the qualities of attention and method. How naturally might we expect from such a man skilful groupings of events and a well-ordered narrative. There are in particular three very signal examples of profoundly instructive and artistically perfect groupings of Jesus' words and deeds; of parables in the thirteenth chapter; of prophecies in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth; and "the glorious garland of miracles" in the eighth and ninth. Every author has his peculiarities of style. Matthew's is antithesis. He tells us in close

proximity of the Prince of Peace and the bloody Herod; of the adoring Magi and the flight into Egypt; of the marvelously beautiful baptism and the terribly tragic temptation. Mark had an impulsive nature. He was a second Peter. He wrote under Peter's eye and like Peter, once at least, fell away; *twice*, Chrysostom thought and also Gregory the Great and others, believing Mark to be the young man with the hastily-seized linen garment who followed a little way and then fled. He held a graphic pen, and loved the circumstantial in word, gesture and look. He was the most realistic of the Gospel painters. I have already given several instances of that vivid and minute fidelity which is almost impossible in romance and which stamps the second Gospel as a veritable statement of facts witnessed by its author. Who but an eye-witness would have written thus, "The waves were beating into the ship, and he was in the hinder part of the ship asleep on a pillow?" Luke was a physician and a man of culture; the only Gentile among the Evangelists; a reflective man, qualified to discern and record motives, as he often did; eminently fitted to give us the connections of events; and so it has been said that while Matthew wrote a narrative; and Mark, memoirs; Luke wrote a history. John

was the theologian, the holy mystic, the apostle of absolute truth, the adoring lover of his Lord and so most like him.

These different characters of the men together with the specially different objects of their writings, the great purpose being all the while the same, gave to their works very different characteristics. We can only glance at the peculiarities of the Gospels. The Gospel of Matthew was primarily the Jews' Gospel. Matthew was a pious Jew, and while his book was to have a world-wide interest, it evidently had also a special adaptation to those of his own class who were patiently waiting for the Messiah. It was an important part of his purpose to invite attention to the fact that the New Testament had its roots in the Old, that Jesus was the Christ; and so he begins with the genealogy of the Saviour. In his first chapter he traces him back, step by step all the way to David. In the second he gives three distinct fulfillments of prophecy, and so he challenges the attention and the faith of every man who believed in the ancient Scriptures.

Mark's gospel was written at Rome, probably under the influence of Peter, and it has just as evident an adaptation to the Roman world. The Roman was no great talker, but very active—so

Mark's gospel is eminently the gospel of action. In Rome it was customary to deify heroes for their deeds, and if it was proposed to enroll some new name among the gods, every Roman would ask the question What has he done? Mark therefore omits the genealogy of Christ, mentions his baptism in three verses and his temptation in two, gives no full account of Christ's sermons, but proclaims in the ears of the heathen of the imperial city his mighty acts. In his first chapter we have a narrative of three distinct miracles, besides the general statement that "He healed many that were sick of divers diseases and cast out many devils."

Luke differs from both these. His object is more comprehensive. He treats of the sayings of Jesus more particularly than Matthew and of his deeds more particularly than Mark. Matthew traces Jesus up to David; Luke traces him to Adam—it is not merely the son of David, it is the Son of Man, whom he preaches to the world. He is not content simply to tell of the twelve apostles, but of the seventy disciples. He gives us the account of the good Samaritan, and makes Jew and Gentile alike. He is a kind of Paul among the Evangelists, teaching that salvation is as wide as the world.

Then comes John. He is not content as Matthew was to trace Jesus back to David ; or as Luke was to trace Him back to Adam. He begins at the beginning: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." And from that divine starting point, he shows us the meaning of Jesus' predicted name, Immanuel ("God with us.") Oh ! this wonderful fourth Gospel, written by him who had "leaned on Jesus' bosom" until he caught the richest music of his throbbing, divine-human heart, and had faithfully walked with him long after all the other apostles had received their martyr-crowns ! Clement calls it "the Gospel of the spirit ;" Pressense, "the Gospel of the idea ;" Ernesti, "the heart of Christ ;" Augustine says, "While the three other evangelists, remain below with the man Christ Jesus, and speak but little of His Godhead, John, as if impatient of setting his foot on the earth, rises from the very first words of his Gospel, not only above earth, and the span of air and sky, but above all angels and invisible powers, till he reaches Him by whom all things were made."

Such in rapid outline are some of the differences between the Four Gospels, and some of the special characteristics of each.

II. In the second place let us inquire after *the sum and essence of the teachings of the Four Gospels*, as interpreted by that "fifth Gospel" which the whole history of Christianity furnishes.

Now suppose you were to undertake the office of giving to an intelligent and thoughtful heathen, who had never studied these records, an answer to the question who is Jesus? What is the statement in these records? and what is the truth of the records as commented on and more fully expounded by the history of the Christian religion? what is their teaching about that man who once walked the earth?

1. The first part of the answer to this question I think would be this. These five Gospels—Matthew's, Mark's, Luke's, John's and God's—(these *five* Gospels—the four and the sublime commentary on them furnished by almost nineteen centuries of Christian history,) teach, to begin with, that *Jesus was the most wonderful man that has ever lived* upon the face of the earth; and that with none of those appliances for becoming famous which the great men of the world have had. He was not an author; he was not a scientist; he was not a philosopher; nor a statesman nor a warrior. He never wrote any books; no proclamations; no letters; not one line

nor word that has survived him; when He wrote, He wrote in the dust. He revealed no scientific truth to man; no new philosophical system; no arts of diplomacy. He assumed no control of the governments of the world. He had no army, no sword: He rebuked the only disciple who ever drew sword for him and healed the mischief that the sword had wrought. And yet—somehow—this man has made himself more famous than any other man. Infidels admit this. I state the fact and for the moment leave it.

You would also have to say, concerning this man Jesus, that he was *a man of a unique moral and intellectual character*; that in these respects He stands alone among men in this world. Let me tell you what his enemies said. A Roman woman wrote to her husband "Have thou nothing to do with that just man." That weak-kneed and forever infamous governor, whose name is known to the world only because of his connection with Jesus, said concerning Him three times "I find no fault in him." His verdict has become the verdict of the whole skeptical world: "I find no fault in him at all." Judas said concerning Him "I have shed innocent blood." The dying thief said: "He hath done nothing amiss." The centurion said: "Truly this man was

the Son of God." And He Himself said—and His witness is true—"Satan cometh and hath nothing in me:" and "Father I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do."

Not only is he morally unique among the sons of men, but intellectually also. In all His teachings that have been reported to us men have never found one error. And still further, they have never added one iota to His teachings on moral and religious subjects. Behold him, going forth into this world—a map of which He had never seen,—moving about among men immensely His superiors in all that education can do, pitched upon by wary lawyers who had put their heads together to puzzle Him. Behold Him at all hours subject to the keenest inquisition and never saying—no matter how profound the question—(as our judges of Courts of Appeals—even those who have sat on the bench forty years are obliged to do—) "Decision reserved." On the instant this wonderful man answered all questions, and not only answered them correctly but in his brief answers brought out without a single mistake those principles of casuistry that have for eighteen hundred years been the solvents of all questions of conscience. What an

intellect had He! In eighteen centuries during which the human mind has been immensely and amazingly busy, men have not added to his teachings one jot. If any man challenges this statement, let him point out to us from all other sources the first ray of moral or religious truth that has been added to the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

2. In the next place the text teaches us that this "*Jesus is the Christ.*" Every Jew understood very well what that meant: to begin with, that He was the fulfillment, (not the fulfiller alone), of all Messianic prophecy: that all prophecy about the Messiah from the beginning is to meet in Him and be fulfilled in Him. When he is on the cross, He is represented as looking down the line of prophets to know if any one has uttered the least word of unfulfilled prophecy which he must fulfill before He dies. The record runs thus:

"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, saith 'I thirst.'"

In scanning the line of prophets who had uttered Messianic predictions, beholding the face of David, He sees what I doubt whether David did see—one iota of prophecy—the dotting of an "i," the crossing of a "t"—a word not yet fulfilled—"I thirst."

Then was fulfilled that apparently insignificant prophecy, "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." And then He said "It is finished," and gave up the ghost. All prophecy concerning the Messiah meets and is fulfilled in Him.

Another thing must come to pass; He must be that wonderful double personage; the most unique of sufferers, and the most triumphant of monarchs. He must be a strange individual, only one side of whom the Jews could see. They, looking for a monarch who should make them the kings of the world, saw only one side. We see both. As we study it, the fulfillment which He gave us in His life and character are amazing. Read Isaiah (LIII) —"a root out of a dry ground;" "despised and rejected," "bruised for our iniquities;"—and then go back and read "unto us a son is given and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." Yet this mysterious and most incomprehensible double picture is perfectly realized in Jesus Christ. These records are given us to show that Jesus is the Christ.

3. Let us now advance another step. The Messiah Jesus is also "*the Son of God.*" Suppose that

in my place, the form of Jesus Christ were standing here to-day, and that He, looking on you with infinite tenderness, should say to you, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" What would be your answer? I would answer, first of all, O Lord, they are busy concerning Thee; in eighteen hundred years they have not forgotten Thee. O brethren, the world very well knows that around the person of Jesus Christ the battle is to be waged on whose issue depends the Christian religion. They do not talk much about Mohammed now; not much of Confucius; Julius Cæsar and Napoleon the Great are nowhere; men do not care for them. But our libraries are full of books about Jesus. Strauss and Rénan, Pressensé and Liddon—men of all shades of opinion—write about Him and inquire about him. The world is full of this wonderful man. And, further, I should have to answer: Some say thou art a fancy portrait; that these Evangelists struck out pictures, with their rough pencils, which are bright and beautiful enough for the world to look at for eighteen hundred years. And more than that; that this fancy portrait has changed the face of the world, and killed polytheism and the old civilization, and brought in the new. But those who say this are so contemptible in number that we

leave them. Many say "He is a myth." They say that He is an individual like Prometheus who perhaps once lived, and that accumulated imaginings have gathered about Him until He is far more fancy than fact, and that this is the Jesus of the Gospels. But brethren, no myth has ever been possible in the world since history began. A myth cannot live in the light of history: and history was before Jesus. When Jesus came into the world pens wrote; and there were public transactions of empires. Jesus was not a myth.

Then suppose He should say "Whom say ye that I am?" I, like Peter, would be the glad spokesman for you all and say, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." In proof let us consider, first, His testimony about Himself; secondly, the affection and confidence He inspired in those who knew him; last of all, the successes He has achieved. The argument suggested by his testimony concerning Himself seems to me irresistible. The disciples of John the Baptist said to him, "Art Thou He that should come or do we look for another?" Jesus replied, "Go tell John again the things which ye do hear and see: the lame walk, the blind receive their sight, lepers are cleansed, the dead are raised and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them."

That is His answer. He claimed in His own right to work miracles. His testimony about himself proves Him divine; because either He was a fanatic or an impostor or else He told the truth; and if He told the truth He is divine. But He was not a fanatic with crazed brain; He understood himself. He was not only the teacher but the embodiment of truth. He had the clearest intellect in all history. Was He an impostor? We see how infidels themselves have given that up; they say He believed what He said and as His testimony about Himself proves Himself divine. "Si Christus non Deus, non bonus."—If Christ be not God he is not a good man.

Consider that He was an unlettered Galilean. His neighbors said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?" And behold, His power over his disciples. Look at St. Paul! at his willingness to preach at Rome! Rome the mistress of the world, that had made the Mediterranean Sea "a Roman lake," girt with the emblems of, humanly speaking, resistless power. You know how the word of the Roman Empire was law from the Nile to the Thames. You know how tyrannical power was centered in the Roman throne. There is now in one of the galleries of France a picture representing this

idea very finely, showing you the amphitheatre at Rome crowded with its eighty thousand spectators, and a gladiatorial combat going on. One man, having brought the other down, with raised sword he uplifts his eye to the vestal virgins that they may signify that the poor wretch is to live or die. And they turn the hand to say "Let him die." Power ground to powder the rights of men and made the State everything. Yet in the midst of those scenes of power that overspread the Roman Empire, I find a little, homely, uninteresting man writing a letter in which he says "I am ready, so much as in me lies to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also; for it is the power of God unto salvation." Oh, what a marvelous influence was the knowledge of this person on those that believed on him.

Then as to his success. There is nothing so successful, brethren, as success. There is nothing that carries such conviction, as the logic of events. Now has Jesus done anything on this planet to justify His claims? He has done this marvelous thing: He has outlived himself. There was a time when thousands of men would have died for the love of Julius Cæsar. There was a time when every grenadier in France would have stood between a cannon shot and Napoleon. But that time has long past in

his case. Some of you were alive when he died; and who now cares for him? Even Frenchmen go to his mansoleum as a kind of holiday pastime. Napoleon is no more. But there is one grave whose ashes never grow cold,—that grave where Joseph of Arimathea expected to lie, but where the body of Jesus was lain. I said “one grave whose ashes never grow cold;” I now say one rifled grave whose glory beams out throughout the universe, and the love of which men can never lose because it once was occupied and now is empty. There are thousands on the earth to-day who would die for Jesus Christ—yet they never saw Him. Let me withdraw that; they have seen Him. There is a sixth sense which God opens, and it can obey the call, “Behold the Lamb.” We have seen Him to-day. Men doubt whether Jesus ever lived. He is more than all others to many in this audience to-day. He is the one reality. These forms will soon fade, but we behold Him by faith, Jesus Christ risen from the dead—risen “to give repentance and remission of sins, and we are His witnesses of these things.”

In the days of Julian the Apostate, that mighty monarch who set himself to overturn Christianity, there was a humble Christian who was asked, one

day by Julian's most celebrated orator, with that sneer which only a Roman could put on in those days, "What is the Galilean carpenter doing now?" The humble Christian raised his face and said, "The Galilean carpenter is making a coffin." And it was only a few months before the coffin was done, and in it the prostrate form of Julian the Apostate lay, and classic polytheism was ended. It is not very long ago since Voltaire said, "In twenty years the Almighty will see fine sport in France;" but before the twenty years were up the Galilean carpenter had another coffin ready and in it lay the prostrate form of the French monarchy. And it is within our easy recollection that the modern Nebuchadnezzar of the nations, Napoleon the Little, said to himself, "See this great nation which I govern and this magnificent capital which I have beautified; I will water my soldiers' horses in the German Rhine, and my cavalry shall ride through the streets of Berlin." And behind him stood the Pope and said, "Do this, my best servant, and my temporal power shall be established again among the nations." And "the Galilean carpenter" was building another coffin, and in less than two months there lay in it the temporal power of the Pope; and, a little later, the prostrate form of Napoleon III.

And ever since "the Galilean carpenter" has been building coffins for His enemies, and weaving crowns of immortal amaranth for His friends.

I have been greatly interested many times, to see what men would say about Him, climbing by the stairway of lofty conceptions and then stopping short of the truth. The knights of old called Him, the mirror of all chivalry:—the monks of the middle ages, the pattern of all asceticism; the philosophers, the enlightener in all truth; Fenelon, the most rapt of mystics; Vincent de Paul, the most practical of philanthropists. An English poet writes:

"The best of men
That ere wore earth about Him was a *sufferer*,
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
The *first true gentleman* that ever breathed."

A skeptical historian calls Him, "the explanation of all history" and says, "In all my study of the ancient times, I have always felt the want of something, and it was not till I knew our Lord that all was clear to me. With Him there is nothing that I am not able to solve." Napoleon declares: "Between Him and whomever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison." Such are a few hints at the testimonies of the unbelievers,

and half-believers, extorted from them by their sense of the super-human character of Jesus.

4. Last of all, and best of all, *Jesus is a real Saviour*. “These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing *ye might have life through His name*.” This is the golden clasp of the girdle; this is the centre of the truth. He came to save the lost. O, if sin and trouble were imaginary, then a fancy portrait, or a myth would answer for a Saviour. If the three Hebrew children had only been cast into a painted furnace of painted fire, then a painted Saviour would have answered. But when real men were cast into a real furnace of fire, then only a real Deliverer was worth anything to them. O thou afflicted soul,

“In the furnace God may prove thee,
Thence to bring thee forth more bright ;
But can never cease to love thee—
Thou art precious in His sight.
God is with thee,
God thine everlasting light.”

Sin is real. St. Paul says, “When I would do good, evil is present with me. What I would, I do not, and what I would not, that I do. O, wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death !”

What would a fancy sketch or a myth be to such a man as that? But hear this: "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit; for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

My dear friends, I do not think of any illustration of this simplest and most fundamental truth that has so impressed it on my mind as an incident I heard from the lips of Bishop Janes. He told of a Jewish lady in Baltimore who gave herself to Jesus. There was a protracted meeting in progress, in which there was noticed a Jewess, several evenings. Afterwards her experience came to the knowledge of the church in this way. Her husband, a gay man of the world, was in the habit of passing his evenings with congenial friends at the theatre or other places of amusement, leaving her alone at home. To relieve the monotony of an evening, (the Methodist church in which a protracted meeting was in progress, being situated in the same street), she slipped out, and, impelled by curiosity attended one of the services. The first evening's service left no particular impression. The question simply arose in her mind, just as a cloud flits over the sky, "Suppose that Jesus was the

Messiah?" The next night, Jesus was again preached, and before the sermon was over the question became more than a question; she said to herself, "Jesus was, perhaps, the Messiah," and it greatly distressed her. On the third night the thought seized her soul and shook it through and through; "Jesus was the Messiah." Of course there came with it—inevitably to a Jewess—the conviction, "I am lost forever for my people slew him." And in that spirit she went home sobbing and wailing. Her husband returned at midnight, and she met him in tears and said at once "Go to some Christian neighbor's and borrow for me a New Testament." He tried to laugh her out of her impressions, or argue her out of them; but it was of no use, and so for the love he bore her, he went out, at half-past twelve in the morning, and rang up a Christian neighbor. When he came to the door the caller said, "I beg your pardon, but will you be so kind as to loan me a New Testament." You may be sure the request was most cheerfully granted. The neighbor thought "There is work in that house to be done for Jesus to-night;" and as soon as he could properly dress himself, he hurried to a Christian brother's, and with him repaired to the Jewish mansion. The door was instantly opened and the

mistress met them with a smile, saying "I have found Jesus!" And then she told the story I have told you, with this addition; she said that, when the Testament was put into her hands, she went into her own room, and kneeling she lifted up her face to Heaven and cried, "O, Lord God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, give me light, give me light!" She opened the Testament with closed eyes and chanced to open it where this Bible is open now, at the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans. She read slowly and the verses went tearing through her soul like hot thunderbolts, until she came to the sixteenth verse—"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth, *to the Jew first*—" Here she stopped, her bursting tears blinded her. She looked again. It is "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." As she read these words she believed them and was saved, and knew it. When the Christian brethren came, she was a Christian. Do men tell me this is a fancy? That there is no reality represented by such an experience as this! When a lion becomes a lamb! When a drunkard becomes sober! When a mean, low, driveling youth is made a very apostle! When a Jewess becomes a Christian! When

Saul passes over into a Paul! Only God works moral miracles like these.

So in every temptation, in every trial, in every emergency, the road out is the same. This Jesus, who is the Christ, and the Son of God, gives life when the soul is ready to perish, through faith in His own blessed name. Look into the dungeons of the Inquisition. There is the dreadful *oubliette*, with only one round entrance from above and that covered with a closely-fitting marble slab. Egress, there is none. Down there men were thrust to be starved by inches:—bread enough for to-day, one ounce less to-morrow, one ounce less the next day, and so on, until in misery and wretchedness, they died of starvation amid blackness of darkness. Yet when one such dungeon was opened, there was found the skeleton of a man, and eighteen inches above it, written with a piece of coal, with the bit of coal still between the skeleton's fingers,—this inscription:

“Oh Christ, they may separate me from Thy church but they cannot separate me from thee.”

Oh ye sons and daughters of sorrow and of sin, hear ye the word of the Lord and believe it for the comfort and salvation of your souls. Jesus is the Christ. He is the Son of God. Believing on Him

ye may *now* have life through His name. By leaving the world He became omnipresent in it for all time. Just before He disappeared from the gaze of his triumphant disciples at Bethany, He said to them, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." And then "He lifted up his hands and blessed them; and it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven." Ever, ever, thou once crucified and now glorified and omnipresent Redeemer, stand thou before our eyes, as thou wast last seen by thine infant church, with thy hands extended over thy people to bless them!

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
He will not, He will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
He will never, no never, no never forsake."

Amen, and Amen.

CHRIST'S ESPOUSAL OF THE LOST,

MANIFESTED IN HIS BIRTH, ALLOTMENT, AND MINISTRY.

BY WILLIAM F. MORGAN, D. D.

GOSPEL OF ST. LUKE, 19th CHAP., 10th VS.—THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST.

The Epiphany of Jesus Christ, which so immediately succeeds His birth and circumcision, may, doubtlessly suggest many enlivening aspects of His divine mission, but none more benignant than this, His espousal of the lost. Let this manifestation be the subject of our discourse to-day, and may God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine in our hearts and give us the light of the knowledge of His glory, in the face of Jesus Christ.

It need scarcely be said at the outset, beloved, that the benevolence of the Godhead had been an eternal manifestation. The leading impulse of Jesus upon earth had been the leading attribute of His character in Heaven, namely; Love, diffusive and all encircling, or, to use the words of

Tertullian,—“He who taught a divine charity through parables and in familiar speech had previously and everlastingly acted upon the loftiest principles and motives of charity,” and if He brought it down to human language and comprehension, it was only in mercy to human weakness. These earthly images and illustrations are “copies of things in Heaven” and only intimate the mind of God. This is strikingly declared in the Parables, every one of which is a sketch of celestial activities forever in full play. Long before the Hebrew or Christian scriptures were written,—before Abraham was—before the world was, the full meaning and moral loveliness of the Good Samaritan had found expression in the Godhead, and the watchful care of the Good Shephard, and the leniency of the Creditor, who forgave ten thousand talents,—and the tender relenting of the Parent, gazing afar for the return of the Prodigal; all these, and unnumbered manifestations beside had been as beams of inextinguishable light in the Epiphany of Heaven. But it had been a light scattered and diffused—not brought to bear with focal power and warmth upon our condition,—not poured with special force upon humanity. It had been the light of universal love, and providential care. But look at this group, my

brethren, where the Virgin Mother holds her babe, and the Wise Men, kneel in pious adoration, offering their gifts. In that new-born child,—in that helpless babe, the light of the Godhead descends upon and enwraps *us*. The yearnings and longings of our race are met. Had He, the Triune God, remained upon His throne,—far above us, out of our sight; invisible and abstract—without embodiment and without expression, we might have felt after Him forever, without finding Him. He might have been all that we now believe Him to be, a God, holy—wise—beneficent; a God of creative power and watchful providence, a God never unmindful of our wants—never inattentive to our cries—a God who with the outgoings of the morning and the evening was ever ready to help us; but, as a God undisclosed, hidden in his own perfections, concealed within the pavilion of His eternal majesty, He could not have been *our* God for whom we had waited, a really living and loving God; whose beaming face we could look into, and the hem of whose earth woven garments we could touch. This is what the heart of man had craved from the beginning, in every vicissitude of life, and under every form of religion,—not merely a God, but a disclosure of the true God and contact with Him. Here is the yearning real-

ized,—after periods, dispensations, prophecies,—the fulness of time has come. God no longer disappoints us. He has placed Himself within our reach. There, where those eastern chiefs are kneeling the cravings of the universal heart has found both its solution and its satisfaction. God is with us; within the circle of our mortal necessities, sorrows, aspirations, and the first clear view of Him that we have, reveals Him under a form most lovely, the most winning, guileless, approachable, known within the limits of our common humanity. The forsaken and the lost of this world have a Babe brought within the range of their experiences and special tribulations. A Babe to comfort and reassured them! And if you can mention any other form of human or intellectual life, more likely to unite the most forlorn of this class, in an intelligent recognition of condescending love, it does not occur to the mind of the preacher. A Babe is aloof from all the prevailing currents of prejudice or opinion. A Babe is unconscious of all that divides men into tribes, or casts, or conditions,—or the world into hemispheres, or continents, or States. To a Babe, wherever born, the whole world is akin, because its purity, and innocency, and humanity and trust, secure every heart. But here is a Babe, whose earliest

life, is lower than the ordinary conditions of infancy. This Babe is an outcast, at least in the literal meaning of that word. He is carried to a stable for shelter. There is no room for Him in the Inn. It is to an outhouse that we must resort, if we would find our Immanuel, and thus is He manifested to us this day, not only as helpless, but homeless, as at a level with those that wander and have no certain dwelling place. A Babe sharing the poor comforts of a cattle stall! And this living fact—this image of a detached, precarious, humble life, has been seized by the world as if the very thing it had coveted, and would forever gaze at, and has been carried through the ages and generations of Christendom, not only in the thankful heart, but in every form of sculpture and of painting. It hangs in matchless treatment and coloring in old cathedrals, and upon grand historic walls of palaces, and galleries, and courts. It adorns the homes of millions upon millions who are content with copies and coarser tints. It is the rude ornament of cottages and cabins, almost as naked and bare as the cattle stall of Jesus. Wherever it hangs—wherever it meets the eye, it carries captive the heart. It is a picture of incarnate Love. It tells the story of Him, who came to seek and to save

that which was lost, and it is a pleasing circumstance, that the light of outer day, which best assists us in the rendering of our accustomed service, and in the reading of Gods Holy Word, comes streaming through that picture in yonder transept, which orphan children have placed there as the memorial of a gentle mother.* It is moreover from this humble and pinched condition to which the Holy Child is born that our festive season derives its special significance and gladness. These lowly circumstances of the Nativity appeal to all, even to kings and nobles of the earth, and always to the lost and broken hearted. Every soul responds to the visible and earthly side of the Incarnation—Childhood is aglow,—all homes and circles catch the inspiration,—Charity comes forth with a smile and a gift, hospitality spreads a generous board, and the Holy Church of God throughout the world rings her chimes, and decks her altars, and prepares her song.

Such to our eyes is Christ's appearing,—manifest in the Flesh. Turn for a moment from this human side to that which is Divine and Spiritual. These scanty and coarse preparations to save the Babe of

* A painted window of much excellence, in the South minor Transept of St. Thomas' Church.

Bethlehem from exposure are instantly transformed into points of light, which help to illumine the world, and these adoring Sages accept the Manger Cradle, as the Throne of their King. In Jesus thus born and thus accepted, the Chasm between Earth and Heaven is bridged over, and a real communication with God is open to man. The two natures which in the person of Jesus are inseparably joined touch two spheres of being,—here, the created, the dependent, the human,—there, the uncreated and Divine. The Mediator. The man Christ Jesus! We cannot over state the absoluteness of His humanity; we cannot exaggerate the absoluteness of His Divinity. God man! We crowd by faith around His cradle, and we bring with us the forsaken and the lost, that we together with them may look upon *our God*, and claim lineage with *our Brother*. Again, this manifestation of our Lord as a Divine Being touching the depths,—ministering to men in their debasement and wretchedness, was not an accident or a sentiment. It was a predetermined and solemn purpose He submitted to an individual discipline and experience. Before He had uttered a reviving word, or stretched forth a supporting hand He sought a natural and practical acquaintance with all the varieties of our condition,

and went through a gradual identification with humanity in its most troubled estate. Sheltered by indigence and unknown Himself, He was a learner, gathering knowledge of our allotment. He knew obscurity in His early surroundings and associations. He knew want. He knew obedience and submission, beneath His mother's eye, and in His Father's trade. He knew the envy and undervaluing contempt of kindred and relations. As a child, as a youth, as a man, He had learned the mysteries of life. He had encountered its strongest vicissitudes. For thirty years this anointed Son of God had been taking the guage and measure of what we understand as *life*. Life on its shady side,—in its bleakest and most disheartening exposures. His destruction had been plotted. He had been lost and found. He had been subject to every trial which could wound a sensitive nature, or straiten and over-shadow a lofty spirit, and the very fact that He grew in wisdom as He grew in stature, only added to His equipment of experiences,—for His very goodness made Him the mock of scorn and misconception among His brethren. Such, at a glance, was His acquaintance with life, even while His Divinity was entirely repressed, and before He had entered openly upon His redeeming work. Scarcely

had He entered upon *that*, when the Devil confronted Him, and led Him into the wilderness to tempt Him. He submitted, and surrendered Himself to the guidance of the Devil, whose kingdom He had come to destroy. Mystery of mysteries! That infernal Spirit had blasted paradise, and ruined the world. The offence which He wrought had enlisted heaven, and brought Christ down. The enemy of God and man; the old Serpent who tempted our first mother Eve,—the shadow and the curse which had followed all the generations of her childhood,—the demon in whose presence the whole Creation had groaned and travailed together, Christ follows *him*, alone, into the wilderness. My brethren it was an essential part of our Savior's training. He had come to seek the lost, and to bind up the broken hearted, and before He could do this as He proposed to do it, it was needful for Him to taste something more than the ordinary outward hardships of life. There were thorns sharper than poverty, and humble condition, more piercing and agonizing than the scorn of men. There were moral horrors, inward griefs, seducings of evil spirits, conflicts, perplexities. These were to be dealt with and assuaged, the throes of spiritual anguish, the torments of men beset by inordinate-

passions and appetites,—the scourge and the fear of conscious guilt, the recoil and shuddering cry of remorse. These entered largely into the inner life of man, and in order to deal with them the Son of Man consented to those very assaults from which they sprang. He was tempted in all points, like as we are. He, the incarnation of purity. The Immaculate, was led into the deserts, and during a period of forty days and nights, endured an overwhelming force of temptation of which we cannot conceive. He was attacked through every sense and intellectual attribute,—allured, flattered, importuned, menaced, parleyed with. Every temptation common to man in his strength or his weakness, in his higher or in his lower life, was launched against the Lord. We are told that He suffered, being tempted, that is the temptation wrought upon Him,* and in resisting it, there was a struggle and painfulness. He resisted, but at the expense of tortured human feeling. There was no reluctance of the will, but there *was* force of desire; for I repeat again the declaration of Holy Scripture, that He was tempted like as we are, just as any frail son or daughter of the human family may be; through natural affection, through implanted desire, through

* Robertson's Sermons.

the sight of the eye, and the hearing of the ear, and through every avenue and inlet of our mortal nature. In these few particulars, beloved, you may perceive how absolutely, and aside from His great final Expiation, Christ allied Himself to our condition, and prepared Himself especially for a ministry to the lost and forsaken.

I remark again, that having thus prepared Himself in this preliminary and personal fellowship with exposure and trial, He went forth straightway upon those very paths, and into the midst of those very associations where He would be most likely to find the objects of His deepest sympathy. And, as if to strike the key-note of His mission just where he had been trained and disciplined for it, He came to Nazareth when He had been brought up, and entering the Synagogue He opened the Scriptures and turned to the very passage in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah which refers to that class of which I am speaking, and looking around upon His astonished auditors, said to them: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. I am He. This is my work. Me hath my Father anointed to preach glad tidings to the poor. Me hath He sent to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to

set at liberty them that are bound, to preach the acceptable Year of the Lord. From that hour He stood among men—I might almost say, at the corners of the streets. He was not in palaces or king's courts, but among men on their common walks. Were you to erase from the ministry of Jesus, or withdraw from the glory of this Epiphany His outdoor work, you would erase nearly all that quickens the pulse of humanity—you would withdraw beams of golden light which now warm the heart of a fallen world. The dialogue with the woman of Canaan—the Syrophenician in the street imploring help—affords a lesson to the world which nothing else could supply, and reveals the most touching picture ever realized of Divinity overcome by the omnipotence of faith. The same may be said of such incidents as the persistent cry of old Bartimeus, the blind man, sitting by the wayside, or the entreaty of the nobleman whose son was sick, or that of the centurion whose daughter lay dying, or that of the poor woman in the crowd who begged only to touch the hem of His garment, or of the Magdalen bathing His feet with repentant tears, or of the frail woman at the well of Sychar. I say, the withdrawal of such daily and familiar incidents from the Gospel might leave its theology

untouched, and the plan of salvation in full play; but it would defraud the universal human heart of that strength and encouragement which are essential to its support under sorrow, and to its victory over sin. And this, my brethren, was the complexion of our Lord's ministry upon earth from first to last. His great Heart was throbbing in sympathy with every form of mortal tribulation, physical, mental, moral, spiritual. His Sermons were short. His statement of doctrinal questions was rapid and decisive. He spake in parables, in precepts, in detached and burning sentences, because His life consisted of works rather than of words. He had come to seek the lost and the lost gathered around Him. The sick and the poor, the widowed and the desolate, mourners and penitents, were continually pressing toward Him whithersoever He went: from all cities and villages, Jews, Samaritans, Greeks, thronged around Him, to be healed of diseases, to be dispossessed of unclean spirits—to touch Him, to bathe His feet, to beg solace beneath the burden of deadly sin—and “He was their Saviour; in all their afflictions He was afflicted; He received them all; He permitted all to come so near that it was turned to His reproach, as in the case of Simon the Pharisee, who was scandalized because Jesus per-

mitted a sinful woman to wash His feet with tears, and to wipe them with the hairs of her head—as in the case of the Scribes, when they brought to Him the woman taken in adultery, for, instead of condemning *her* He convicted *them* and sent away the erring one with a solemn admonition. And so always. He went home with Zaccheus the publican. He sat and ate with sinners; His word lay among them; He was their friend, and they recognized Him as such. For, as was once said by an eminent foreign Divine—while His purity was as the light—while His carriage and conversation was that of a God—while He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners by an infinite spotlessness, they still saw in Him love, pity, tenderness, and were not afraid, but came around Him, assured that He would stoop in compassion to the evil; that He would show compassion for what was not pure; that He would feel for the ruined and touch the fallen with a hand of gentleness. And so it was harlots and the wretched gathered around Him. The outcasts of society followed Him and knew Him to be their friend—because in Him they saw something more than man—something higher and purer—something which won them as nothing else could. In Him they saw a hope opened into a

hopeless world, for fallen spirits and broken hearts. He was the Son of Man and yet the Son of God, standing among the lost, with a feeling of sadness—seeing the evil in human nature, seeing the good—knowing the temptation, mourning over its power and its result, and bending over a misled, mutilated nature, as a Good Shepherd would bend over a lamb entangled in a thorn bush.

Now, beloved, what are we to gather from this rapid *resumé* of Christ's mission and ministry? I answer, the lesson of our duty to the lost. If such was His mission,—such is the mission of His church forever. The anointing which was upon the Head; must flow down upon the members. A hand outstretched toward the lost must be the *in hoc vinco* of all Christian effort and success, and accordingly in the midst of sects and theologies and of that audacious, self asserting spirit which especially marks our day, I entreat you to sit meekly at the feet of this Jesus, and learn of Him. Under His touching manifestations as Saviour of the lost,—the lost of every name, and class, and degree,—the Church should find her warrant and her work. It is a warrant which cannot be invalidated; it is a work which must proceed, and find its spur and multiform material so long as the world stands. And it is a

fact which we may deprecate, but which may not for one moment be concealed, that just so far as any religious system is an exponent of Christ's sympathy with the ruined, and lays hold upon the lost in His spirit and for His sake, so far is that system recognized as a living thing,—having in it salt and leaven and light. It may lack the accredited essentials of a church. It may vary altogether from Christ's own Institution. It may do despite in many practical ways to His commands and obvious intentions. It may discard a three-fold ministry, and hold ritual and creeds and sacraments and discipline in dis-esteem. It may retain only a scintilla of what is apostolic and primitive in its worship, or in its order, or its authority,—and yet addressing itself to the *lost* it instantly establishes a claim, and secures a hearing, and exerts an influence, and accomplishes a result which seem to bear the endorsement and unite the suffrages of God and angels and good men. The wretchedness of this world is so abounding; its cries of remorse are so sharp and piercing, that even the claims of a Divine Church and a Royal Priesthood appear to be impertinent, if they do not interpose almost with vehemence and violence, to seize the sinking, and reclaim the erring, and overtake the lost. It must

not be in pretensions or in fundamental questions that we rest. It must not be in offices or prerogatives that we are content to find repose and respectability. It must not be in channels of grace, or in what is visible, perpetual, historic, and catholic, that we alone, or largely, make our boasts. Such terms carry with them, I allow, a great significance, and are held in great honor and reverence by your preacher. But I declare unto you again, beloved, it is not in her *equipment* that the church of Jesus Christ is to glory, but in her *mission* as she finds it set forth in the Birth and allotment and ministry of her Founder and Head. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Here is our example and here our commission. We are to keep both before us, and with all the helps and means provided by the church; with all her priestly powers, and properly adjusted instruments; with her authority to teach the ignorant, and absolve the penitent and rebuke the wilful and guide the blind and lift up the fallen and bruise Satan beneath every foot; we are to go forth, Ministers and Laymen, Priests and people to our appointed office in the midst of this fallen world. Every Christian by virtue of his baptismal seal is an incumbent of this

office, and while there may be and will be, an inequality of functions, there is not a member of the church who has not one "fairer than the Sons of Men" to follow, and a heavenly work of moral healing to discharge for ourselves. Moreover, I may say, dear brethren, that we have not only the life of our adorable Lord to impel us, but we have a field to occupy and to answer for, which should enkindle zeal and effort and Christian liberality to the uttermost.

The metropolis in which we dwell swarms with the lost and the forsaken. The sun does not shine upon a portion of this globe where the special work of Christ is more needed than in our midst. I would not exaggerate the evils which infest this city. I love it, and know what a vast reserve of excellence and uprightness and purity is lodged in it, and yet it is a guilty city. Oh, most guilty! You may describe to me the exposures and immoralities of foreign cities, but recent statistics will confirm me in the declaration that for gross sensuality; for bold shameless vice; for ignorance; for debasement; for downright heathenism, the whole world cannot furnish more appalling exhibitions than are to be found *here*, in the very bosom of Gospel day. Our churches cast their shadows upon the chambers of

despair. Parents and children involved in a common misery; the old and the young of either sex; those who have sunk away from early care and privilege, through misfortune, and those who have been separated from earlier associations by the leprosy of sin in their multitudes, cower and hide among us. The tempted; the fallen; those who know the misery of having quenched a light brighter than the Sun; the intolerable sense of being sunk; the remorse of feeling that they are not what they might have been. Do you not hear their cry? It is not the cry of those who seek for bread, or for shelter, or for raiment. It is not the cry of those who languish in desolate places, but the cry of souls burdened with transgression and shame. Souls which feel the loneliness of sin. Souls which have departed from God and are forsaken by Him. Souls bitterly repentant, agonized, utterly crippled, and yet longing to be good; yearning to return; the lost! the lost! Did Christ come to seek these? Did He come to save them? Did He stand in their midst as a Healer and Absolver? He did, and shall we neglect them? My brethren we neglect them at our peril. Dare we slight those whose welfare the Lord espoused; those for whose recovery He so patiently and tenderly ministered? Then both as Christians

and as citizens we may expect the recoil of a terrible retribution. The example which we despise will be our challenge on the Day of Judgment. Ye did it not to these. Ye did it not to Me; while, meantime, the sinful class which we abandon, will spread a contagion which will taint and poison the air and penetrate our habitations, and by a moral epidemic number our own offspring among the lost. Blessed Master we will not do despite to thy example. We will not disregard Thy fellowship with the lost. We will recognize our relationship with them; our common origin, our common redemption, our common destiny. We will strive to uplift and restore them! For one, brethren, I have an illimitable faith in the recovery of the lost. I care not into what slough they may have sunk, or into what toils of the devil they may have been betrayed. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin. The love of Jesus Christ reaches to the depths of *all* debasement, and this aspect of our Epiphany; this special manifestation, is the Gospel in its full, literal, complete adaptation and use. The Gospel in contact with its most legitimate objects,—working in its own most appropriate sphere.

Beloved brethren, let us be a living Church, not merely apostolic in origin or primitive in pattern,

but living, actuating, energizing. Let this Gospel in our hands be something more than a system or a dogma,—something more than a dry, unprolific thing. Let it be a power; a fountain of sweet waters, swelling up from the depths of Christian love, refreshing to ourselves and pouring over the deserts of this world, the currents of regenerating, renovating life, and hastening on the day, when a festival like this, shall be not only an attestation, but a living and an unquestioned witness, in every latitude and land, that the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

CHRIST'S SANCTION TO THE AUTHORITY OF REVELATION.

BY REV. THOS. D. ANDERSON, D.D.

TEXT:—"AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, 'THESE ARE THE WORDS WHICH I SPAKE UNTO YOU WHILE I WAS YET WITH YOU, THAT ALL THINGS MUST BE FULFILLED WHICH WERE WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES, AND IN THE PROPHETS, AND IN THE PSALMS, 'CONCERNING ME.' THEN OPENED HE THEIR UNDERSTANDING, THAT THEY MIGHT UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES, AND SAID UNTO THEM, 'THUS IT IS WRITTEN, AND THUS IT BEHOVED CHRIST TO SUFFER, AND TO RISE FROM THE DEAD THE THIRD DAY.'"—LUKE, XXIV. CHAP., 44, 45, 46 v.

Some years ago there appeared from the pen of perhaps the shrewdest of our sceptical thinkers a volume entitled, "The Conduct of Life." It consists of a collection of essays, the arrangement of which is suggestive. The first is on Fate, the last is on Illusions. Near the close of the book, after

a question implying the most absolute negation of all knowledge, the author lets us into the secret recesses of the breast of Scepticism by an apparently involuntary exclamation. In this shudder his whole being seems to express itself. Can we covet such a result? Is this all that this finely stored, ingenious, elegant mind can offer us, when rejecting Revelation he returns from his lonely search into the conduct of life?

Refusing the truth of God's personal sovereignty, yet finding that man's finite volition is circumscribed, Mr. Emerson begins his essays with "Fate." Casting aside the certain announcements of Inspiration, he closes the series with "Illusions," exclaiming on the very brink of utter unbelief, "What terrible questions we are learning to ask!" Surely the soul of this gifted writer has in its wrestlings grasped something like prophetic power and voiced its experience to a foreboding that confirms the words of the Holy Spirit, "Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." * Before then we consent to throw away the Bible, from which Christianity draws her divine lessons for the conduct of life, and realizing the immense importance of the questions at issue we are justified

* 2 Tim., 3, 7.

in demanding something more certain than the mere negation of knowledge, and more comforting than the dismal foreboding of our own ignorance.

The authority of Revelation must be admitted or Christianity is not possible. The interests, vast as they are, which gather around the one invest the other. Does Christianity assert that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life?" * Bearing to every heavy laden soul the Saviour's gracious invitation, "Come unto Me," does she promise "rest?" † Beneath her ministry do "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God?" ‡ Does she so impart courage to the weak who sees the mighty work to which he is called as to enable him to exult in the assurance, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me?" § Are her followers taught to believe that in all tribulation, distress, and peril they will be "more than conquerors?" || Is it the expectation of Christianity that God will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth," "that we should be to the praise of His Glory?" ** So we hold. But we ground our faith alone in the Word of God; the

* John, 3, 36. † Matt. 11, 28. ‡ Rom. 8, 28. § Phil. 4, 13.

|| Rom. 8, 37.

** Eph. 1, 10, 12.

revelations of whose Old Testament are declared infallible by the teaching, the example, and the suffering of the Son of God, and in whose New Testament He laid the foundation of our confidence in His promise of the Holy Spirit, when He declared, "He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." *

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." † Without this inspiration we neither have nor can have the life of Christianity. For Christianity embodies herself in the fulfilment of prediction uttered only by the Spirit; exists in facts, the credibility of which stands or falls with the truthfulness of the Sacred Record; makes known conditions whose validity must depend on an authentic announcement of Jehovah's will; and dispenses promise and threatening, hope and fear, life and death, with a sovereign disposal that is blasphemous unless it unerringly proceeds from the mind of the Holy One. Rejecting the Inspiration of the Scriptures, a man may generalize a system, may embrace a faith, may be the sincere and earnest advocate of a creed, may inculcate and practice a religion; but that system, that faith, that creed, that religion is not, cannot be Christianity.

* John 14, 26.

† 1, Tim. 3, 16.

Let "the natural man," who "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him—neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" *—let such an one pass through the Bible with his profane eclecticism; let him amend the record, expunge the supernatural, argue the conclusions and advance from the obsolete; let him liberalize the exclusiveness, soften the denunciations, and blot out the cross; then, patronizing its morality, let him substitute reason for faith, and the mystic Glory has departed from the Ark of the Covenant, leaving the sceptic to roam drearily through a temple forsaken of its God. It is the infallibility of the Bible that constitutes it the guide to Immortality. Remove this and all sanction to human hope is gone. Nothing is offered to soothe the unrest of the soul that rises above the source of its own perplexities and fears. Wearied Speculation, no longer controlled by the accompanying cloud and fire of the Divine Guidance, searches in vain for some promised land, and dies disappointed in the trackless wastes of its earlier wanderings.

The authority of the written Revelation has received the attention of the ablest minds, and, as we

* 1, Cor. 2, 14.

think, has been established by several distinct courses of argument. We confine ourselves to one. We offer in evidence, for the infallibility of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, no less a witness than the Son of God. It may be objected that this touches only one portion of the Bible. We admit it, but reply: First, In the nature of the case it is only to the Old Testament that our line of proof can apply. But it applies to it as a whole, for Christ referred to the volume which had been collected together and recognized as the Word of God in His time under its familiar title, "The Law, The Prophets, and the Psalms," accepting all as of Divine authority. Second, The Inspiration of the Old Testament is much more frequently questioned than that of the New. Third, The Old Testament contains in its history, its law, its prophecies, and its ritual, the foundation of and preparation for the New Testament. The two being so intimately connected that if the authority of either be settled it must settle that of the other. Fourth, If a written Revelation be admitted as of divine authority, we have gained the principle, and may leave to other methods of proof and criticism the settlement on solid ground of the authenticity and genuineness of the entire canon of the word of the God.

JESUS CHRIST GAVE HIS SANCTION TO THE AUTHORITY
OF REVELATION.

He so enwrapped Himself in the written word that they stand or fall together. It is impossible to weaken the claim of the Hebrew Scriptures to our reverence without impeaching the testimony of the Son of God. He distinctly asserted Himself to be the Light of the World, to know, as He only could, the Father, and yet He taught that a rejection of Moses' writings necessarily implied a disbelief of His words.* Few may be bold enough to adopt the views of the French author of the "Life of Jesus;" but in discarding the Inspiration of the Old Testament what else is done than charging Him who spake as never man spake with practising on the credulity of His hearers? From this impossible hypothesis we turn to the only other alternative and accept the divine authority of "THE LAW, THE PROPHETS AND THE PSALMS" on the testimony of our Lord as given under the three following forms:

I. Jesus endorsed the Old Testament by accepting for Himself in every minute particular its portraiture of the Messiah.

* John, 5, 47.

The original and peculiar glory of the Bible is its revelation of the Messiah. In this effort Inspiration undertook what no unaided human wisdom could accomplish. It is not the delineation of exalted manhood—not the ideal of human perfection, difficult as such a task would be for a fallen and depraved mind. Deity must be presented, and not merely in some of His attributes, nor yet as a shadowy form on the distant clouds of His own glory, but as a well defined personality. God in man, thinking, feeling, speaking, acting in human relations, proposing the recovery of the lost to an immortality of holiness, solving the mighty problem of remitting Law's penalty while adding sanction to its claims, gathering from the apparent weakness of death the resurrection forces of eternal life, and out of the mists of the tomb clothing His redeemed ones with the garments of Glory.

This very conception stamps the Book as unique among all works of the intellect. Others may give us the condemnation of wrong and attempts at its correction, the record of heroes, the hopes of the virtuous, the philosophies of the wise, the facts of science and the ideals of genius. Nor are such efforts to be despised. The human intellect has done what it could. If it could not soar to Heaven

and reveal "the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God," * it is only because sin is not holiness, the finite cannot comprehend the Infinite, humanity is not divine. Just here is the distinction between the Bible and all other books. In *these* the human speaks; in *that* the Divine. The Bible utters thoughts that could originate only in Jehovah's breast, pencils the ideal of the man who is His fellow, and reveals the clear impressions of the mould into which was cast the life of Jesus of Nazareth, who, at its close, was "declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." †

This attempt at portraying the Deity in flesh is not confined to any single portion of Holy Writ. It depends on no isolated scrap of glowing imagery. Through every book of the Old Testament, from the promised "Seed" of Genesis ‡ to the prediction of Malachi § that "the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple," "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." ||

In the ordering of the temple worship some line of the Messiah is graven on every thing. From the

* Eph. 3, 9.

† Rom. 1, 4.

‡ Gen. 3, 15.

§ Mal. 3, 1.

|| Rev. 19, 10.

door whereby you enter until you approach the Shekinah between the Cherubim on the Mercy seat; from the blood of the victim to the flashing breast-plate on the High Priest's robe; from the daily offerings of the morning and evening Sacrifice to the annual ceremony of Atonement, every object and every rite foreshadows the great Propitiation.

Men were specially raised up that Inspiration might select from them some trait of disposition, some act of power, some incident of life, some position, trial, or success, or some spirit-taught confession that should tell of Him who was to come. Job in the land of Uz knows that his "Redeemer liveth." * Abraham in Canaan learns that in his "seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." † The Patriarchs around the dying Jacob in Egypt hear of the "Shiloh." ‡ The "manna" and "rock" of the wilderness teach the wandering Israelites the "bread" and "water of life." § David on Mount Zion sings "The Lord is my Shepherd." || Isaiah beneath the waning glories of the Jewish Kingdom chants in almost evangelic numbers the triumphs of the "Man of Sorrows." ** Jeremiah in the midst of his gloom beholds "The Lord our

* Job 19, 25.

† Gen. 22, 18.

‡ Gen. 49, 10.

§ John 6, 32, 48, 49; I Cor. 10, 4. || Ps. 23, 1. ** Isa. 53.

Righteousness." * Ezekiel by the river of Chebar describes the city whose name is "The Lord is there." † Daniel in Babylon sees the increase of "the stone cut out of the mountains, without hands." ‡ Micah celebrates "Bethlehem Ephrata" as the birth-place of the "Ruler in Israel." § Haggai announces the glory of the "latter house" when "the Desire of all nations shall come." || Sechariah counts the "thirty pieces of silver" ** weighed as the price of atoning blood. Malachi, closing the canon of ancient prophecy, overleaps the space of centuries, and standing by the forerunner on the banks of the Jordan heralds the advent of "the Lord whom ye seek," "even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in." † †

All this the Bible records. It declares where angels only wonder. It hesitates not to prescribe, even to the Lord of life and glory, the toil, the poverty, the temptation, the betrayal, the cross, and the tomb, in all of which "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." ‡ ‡ And all this the Incarnate Deity accepts. Claspings in one whole all the Old Testament Scriptures under their recognized title, "The

* Jer. 23, 6. † Ez. 48, 35. ‡ Dan. 2, 44, 45. § Mic. 5, 2.
 || Hag. 2, 7. ** Zech. 11, 12. † † Mal. 3, 1. ‡ ‡ Heb. 5, 8.

Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms," He subjects to their exact fulfilment in His person His claim to the Messiahship.

No clearer testimony to the infallibility of the written word could be given than Christ furnishes by yielding to its dictates that life on earth whereon depended the salvation of men and the glory of God. As He descends from His Father's throne amid the silenced harps of heaven, on His mission of Redemption, we hear the voice of the Anointed acknowledging the authority of Inspiration in the memorable words, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will oh my God." * He becomes incarnate in Bethlehem, because "thus it is written." † He sojourns in Nazareth "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophets." ‡ He condescended to be baptized by John in the Jordan, "for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." § He turns His adversaries, the Jews, to their sacred oracles for a confutation of their unbelief, saying, "Search the Scriptures * * * they are they which testify of me." ||

This conforming of His life to the requirements of

* Is. 40, 7, 8.

† Matt. 2, 5.

‡ Matt. 2, 23.

§ Matt. 3, 15.

|| John 5, 39.

Revelation is all the more striking when we observe with what exalted dignity the Lord uniformly withdraws His conduct from human dictation. When the eager ambition of His kindred advised His going up to the Feast, that He might be seen openly, "He abode still in Galilee." * When the love of His disciples would restrain Him from meeting the fury of the Jews, He asks them, "Are there not twelve hours in the day," † and steadily presses on to Jerusalem. When the demand is curiously made either by the versatile populace or by the royal Herod for a "sign," ‡ divinity veils itself within the visage of weakness and sorrow, and they only "esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted." § Even maternal interference must not enter the inner shrine where rests Omnipotence, or the firm yet gentle inquiry, "Woman what have I to do with thee?" || reminds Mary that her Son is Lord and only to be obeyed. Human judgment, friendship, wisdom, love, must not be allowed to counsel the omniscience of the incarnate Word, but the slightest whisper of the Book is respected.

At the remembered prediction of indignant zeal the Temple is swept of its profane occupants.* *

* John 7, 9.

† John 11, 9.

‡ John 6, 30 ; Lu. 23, 8, 9.

§ Isa. 53, 4.

|| John 2, 4.

** Ps. 69, 9 ; John 2, 17.

That in Him might converge the lines of contrast which had drawn the picture of the meek and lowly King of Zion, He rides down the slope of Olivet, "sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass," and enters the city amid the shouts of the multitudes as they cry "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." * At last on the Cross, His eye already closing in death fixes on one lone and almost undiscernible prophecy not yet fulfilled. His drooping head is raised, a quiver passes through His nearly pulseless frame, His lips part and Jesus says, "I thirst"—yes, "that the *Scripture might be fulfilled* saith I thirst." "They filled a sponge with vinegar, put it upon hyssop and put it to His mouth." "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar," but not till then, "He said 'It is finished,' and He bowed His head and gave up the Ghost." † Oh wonderful Book, whose minutest *prophecy* must protract the dying agonies of the Son of God that it may become *history*! He waits for the simple sponge touch to His fevered lips before He cries "It is finished," because "all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning" Him.

* Zech. 9, 9; Matt. 21, 5, 9.

Ps. 69, 21; John 19, 28-30.

Unimpeached must forever remain the truth of the Old Testament while its prophecies of the coming Christ are chosen by Jesus of Nazareth to record His history from the birth at Bethlehem to the ascension on Olivet. Christian would you learn God's estimate of the Bible? Look on Him, who was "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person," * living to verify it and dying to fulfil it. Reflect that in its lofty aims the aspirations of the God-man were satisfied; that in its prescribed duties "the Word made flesh" exhibited His sinless life; and that "for the joy that was set before Him" in its divine promises "He endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." † The more you reverence its wisdom, follow its guidance, and obey its precepts, the more will you be like Christ.

II. Jesus taught that the Old Testament infallibly revealed the truth of God, and that appeal to its authority was final.

The light that projected the Saviour's life as a sublime fact along the world's history He chose should have its source in the holy Scriptures rather

* Heb. 1, 3.

† Heb. 12, 2.

than shine out independently from heaven. The witnesses to whose testimony He referred in proof of being the Anointed, for He received "not testimony from man," were the "Father" and "His word." * He charges the religious errors of the Jews directly to their ignorance of the Scriptures. "Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God." † He at the same time corrects their mistakes and teaches them the truth, not by a fresh revelation, but by the record of what God had spoken to their fathers, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." ‡ Replying to the question of the Lawyer, "Which is the great commandment of the Law?" He allows of no selection, but grouping the whole into love to God and love to man, asserts that "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." § By His constant reference to "the Law" He appeals to the authoritative decision of what is written. He asserts its binding force on every man, when He declares in the Sermon on the Mount, "I am not come to destroy but to fulfil," and repudiates forever the boast of human progress that it has outgrown the written Revelation by the

* John 5, 34, 37, 38.

† Matt. 22, 29.

‡ Matt. 22, 32; Ex. 3. 6.

§ Matt. 22, 36-40.

solemn announcement, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." * He refers His rejection by the Jews to their disbelief of Moses writings, "For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me; but if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe My words." † Here we have Christ's own assertion that no independent authority was conferred on His words to compel the assent of those who rejected the record of the Scriptures. The Spirit who dwelt in Christ without measure, did not supersede His earlier revelations. Nor is this all. The multitudes regarding Jesus as more than man followed Him everywhere to behold the wonders which He did, and seemed to cling to the delusion that some new miracle, some stranger sign or some further display of power would free them from perplexity and solve their doubts; but how hopelessly must have fallen on such the closing words of our Saviour's narrative of "the rich man and Lazarus," "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." ‡

The Incarnate Word determines that nothing shall rise above the authority of the written word. His

* Matt. 5, 17, 18.

† John 5, 46. 47.

‡ Luke 16. 31.

revelations of "the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God," are all made in the line of light which shines from Inspiration. The unfolding of His own person and work is but the interpretation of earlier symbols. In no instance is the truth of the past centuries allowed to be set aside as unworthy the study of the present. His stern rebuke fell on them, who "made the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition."* While the glories of the new dispensation were represented as the sequel of an earlier covenant when Jesus, in the Synagogue at Nazareth, after reading from Isaiah's roll said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." †

The attitude of reverence which the Saviour ever held toward the teachings of the Old Testament, is both striking and instructive. We can draw no line of distinction between His obedience to the will of the Father dwelling in the depths of His own consciousness and that which was expressed on the sacred page. The truth of the one was as infallible as that of the other, and alike He reflected the glory of both. In His essential oneness with the Father He stands apart from all created beings, but in His obedience, learned although a Son, we have the

* Matt. 15, 6.

† Luke 4, 21; Isa. 61, 1.

bright example that directs His followers through all ages to the living oracles as the Truth by which they are sanctified.* The fountain source of that stream which, through His weary pilgrimage on earth, ever refreshed the strength of God's Eternal Son, must be divine. Nor could its waters, through their flow of centuries, have borne to Him one drop impure.

III. Jesus showed that resistance to temptation is effected only by adherence to the written word.

When we carefully review our Lord's temptation in the wilderness we discover one of the most remarkable instances of deference to Revelation possible. The One to whom the tempter came was Himself divine. All stores of knowledge were at His disposal. All influences were beneath His control. To show His personal authority a fresh command might have leaped from His lips and instant obedience have been enforced. Nor are we permitted to doubt that had this been the better or more effective way, it would have been adopted by Him whose ways are perfect. When, therefore, we find the Son falling back on what the Holy

* John 17, 17.

Spirit long since had committed to writing, we may conclude that even He had no more sure resistance to the power of temptation than an exact adherence to the Inspired word.

In this conflict with the arch-deceiver in three different directions is the word interposed by the Captain of our salvation as a shield against his subtle shafts.

It is opposed to the demands of our nature and the cravings of appetites originally implanted by the Creator, when inciting to sinful gratification.

It is used to ward off the attacks made on our fidelity, that gather their force from the common impulses of our humanity.

And when a captious spirit, arraying one passage of God's word against another, would betray its victim into a false credulity, Jesus assumes that the unity of Inspiration renders such a strife impossible and enforces the plain command.

Does famished nature second the temptation of the evil one? Its voice is disregarded. It may plead its necessities. It may argue that Revelation cannot be presumed to oppose nature when both proceeded from Jehovah. It may deprecatingly cry God will have mercy and not sacrifice. But, no!

In distrust of the Father these stones must not be turned into bread, for "It is WRITTEN, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God." *

In a seeming conflict between the inferences to be drawn from different passages of the Bible might not Jesus avail Himself of this uncertainty for the attainment of some high purpose? To prove His Messiahship might He not cast Himself from the pinnacle of the Temple sustained by the promise, "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone?" † No, not when plainly "It is WRITTEN again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." ‡

When success, that charm to noble minds, offers itself with all its appliances for good; when with the sceptres of the kingdoms of the world within His grasp, He so easily may make them the Kingdom of God; when, without passing through the agony of Gethsemane, the death of the Cross, and the darkness of the grave, He may sway the empire

* Matt. 4, 4; Deut. 8, 3.

† Matt. 4, 6; Ps. 91, 11, 12.

‡ Matt. 4, 7; Deut. 6, 16.

of the world by just one outward act of allegiance to its great Prince: May not the Man of Sorrows, already bowed so low, atoning by an eternity of loyal blessedness for one brief surrender to the tempter, fall down in homage at his feet? Saviour forgive the bare union of Thy name with such a thought! Thy own answer is already in our ears: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is WRITTEN, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." *

A more exalted position can never be given to the Sacred volume. It was worn as the breast-plate of righteousness by the Captain of our Salvation in all the conflicts of the war He waged with the spoiler. It was the inspiration of strength breathed by the Spirit into the sorrowing heart of Jesus as He was being made perfect through suffering. It was the seal of the Father's approval of the Son's mission, and told when the work of redemption was finished.

Had Jesus lived His life on earth for no other purpose than to throw the sanction of His omniscience around the writings of the Old Testament, we see not how more perfectly He could have accomplished His design. He excepted nothing as the interpretation

† Matt. 4, 10; Deut. 6, 13, 14.

of error. Nothing was so old as to be declared obsolete. Nothing was so wonderful as to be expunged. The separate books composing the canon had long before been collected into one, and recognizing them all, as He did in our text, by their common title, "The law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms," Christ has forever established the authority of the sacred writings of His time.

In thus establishing the authority of the Old Testament the conclusion is inevitable that Christ has also established the authority of the New Testament provided it bears the marks of genuineness. Into this argument, so often and so ably settled, we cannot enter. When, however, we become willing to discredit the only record that bears to us the life and teachings and death and resurrection of the Son of God, our subject will have lost its interest, for to us Christianity will be no more.

To the Bible then, my brethren, as held up before us in its divine authority by our Lord let us always refer our Christian life. The one can be approved only as it is the transcript of the other. The relation between them, as illustrated by the testimony of Jesus, is threefold: that of Ideal, Instruction, Protection. The only true conception of the Christian

life, of its nature, impulses, and aims, is derived from the sacred Scriptures. Into this heaven-drawn mould run the warm affections of the soul until the renewed nature bears in high relief every impression of the divine pattern.

In all perplexities the Christian has but one infallible source of wisdom. Instead then of arguing when Inspiration soars above reason, instead of accepting as conclusions the intuitions of a fallen mind, instead of being spoiled "through philosophy and vain deceit after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," * let faith accept the "More sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts." †

Exposed to the malignant assaults of Satan you can gain no cover from his thrusts better than by retiring, as your Saviour did, behind the written word. Your arguments he can overthrow: your intentions he can frustrate; your will he can trample down. But the command of his Sovereign and yours even the Devil must respect, and from the wielded power of divine Truth he is compelled to flee.

* Col. 2, 8.

† 2. Per. 1, 19.

Blessed Jesus as the sweetest substitute for Thy personal presence along the path of life, open Thou our understandings that we may understand the Scriptures.

JESUS—HIS SELF—INTROSPECTION.

BY THOMAS ARMITAGE, D. D.

JOHN X : 38. THE FATHER IS IN ME.

The masterly genius of Goethe, as interpreted by Carlyle, discovers the predestined glory of Christ's religion. He creates the hut of a fisherman, and makes it the mysterious centre upon which the eyes of benighted generations rest with hope, till, at last, it becomes to them the most beautiful temple. He breathes immortal life into this story in these words : " By virtue of the lamp locked up in it, the hut had been converted from the inside to the outside into solid silver. E'er long, too, its form changed ; for the noble metal shook aside the accidental shape of planks, posts and beams, and stretched itself out into a noble case of beaten ornamented workmanship. Thus, a fair little temple stood erected in the middle of the large one ; or, if you will, an altar worthy of the temple." This passage is one of the finest possible parables of the simple, the profound, the natural, and the true, that can be given for the perfect expression of a divine work, either in nature

or redemption. It carries you back to the lowest and highest phases in the philosophy of nature, as well as to the profound results of metaphysical reasoning; for all nature displays its true beauty by an outcome from its interior bosom to its exterior dependencies, from the timid violet, blushing amongst the clover-leaves under the hawthorne, to the burning sun in the centre of our planetary system. On the wings of the wind, the modest violet waves its invisible vapours of incense, from the life within to the life without, while the gorgeous sunbeam flows from the fiery sun to penetrate all space. What is true in nature is also just as real in spiritual being, and is nowhere seen more clearly than in Christ and Christianity. Christ is the great central fact in the history of this world, and as every living phenomenon must first naturalize and then authenticate itself, by proving its source, it becomes us to inquire whence came this unique, mental, moral, and spiritual Being. He makes himself the standard of virtue—keeps the brain of the world perpetually on the stretch—shapes all the forms of civilization which he touches—controls men's convictions, affections and actions, and maintains his empire in a life and stability, which seem to have interwoven it with the very tissues of human duration itself. If he is the

ineffable temple transformed out of the fisherman's hut, had he an architect? If he is an undying pulse, who first invoked his life? or rather, was it invoked at all? Whence did he come? Is he a creation or an unoriginated infinite? Is he of heaven or of men? These are questions which a child may put, but which he alone can answer—which men did put to him, and which he did answer. They demanded; "Who art thou? Whom makest thou thyself?" And he, in perfect self-recognition, opens his heart, speaks out of its abundance, telling them plainly what he thinks of himself, saying: "I know whence I am, and whither I go." "I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father." "I and the Father are one. The Father is in me and I in the Father."

Some one has expressed the wish, that each man's breast possessed a window, through which all the mechanism of his inner life could be watched in its complex movements. The wish concedes the impossibility of reading the secrets of the heart's recesses without light from the outside, and Bunyan with a master's hand reveals these hidden transactions, when, in the dark room of the Interpreter's House, by a ray through a chinking in the closed

shutter all that is in the room is discovered. Each man lives two lives, the inward and invisible with the outer and tangible life. But the outward is dependent on the inward. What is true of all others, was equally true of Jesus. Hence, it becomes a question of the highest moment for us to know what that inner life of Jesus was, which gave such an outside rendering of absolute perfection. If his exterior life is the translation, by words and acts, of all that he is inwardly, then, we shall be able to trace the concrete of his outward life to the abstract virtue of his inward life. We know that this inner and outer life exists in our own persons, for in us the one always appeals to the other, and under these appeals the outward always becomes like the inward. In some respects the two differ, but the inward man at last, must always give its true worth to the outward. Clothe the outer man in purple, but it is worthless if the soul of Dives heaves under the vestment, or wrap it in rags, and the soul of Lazarus throbbing under the tatters will be heroic, even God-like. Rags or royalty on the outer man, make no difference, so long as you read under their folds the distinction between Dives and the beggar, in the inner man. The worth of the man, nay, the whole man lies there, and, therefore, the real man. Our

Lord himself avowed this principle in the words : “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart sends forth good things ; and the evil man out of the evil treasure sends forth evil things. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” The mouth, then, is the channel through which the soul talks, just as the nostrils are the tubes through which the body breathes. Thus, the mouth is the Gate Beautiful through which you reach the sanctuary of the inner soul, the orifice through which the organs of speech make known the secret utterances of the real life. But every man talks to himself before he talks to others, so that his inner life is the converse which he has with himself, and when his inner thought publishes itself by vocal utterance, his inner consciousness becomes public property by that act. So, then, if that introspection falls upon the world’s ear, voiced in the forms of command or the exactions of obedience, as in the behests of Jesus, the world has a right to know by what authority he can enforce his mandate. This natural right gave pertinence to the double question with which the world plied him : “Whence hast thou this authority, and who gave thee this authority ?” The words of the text give the all-sufficient reply to this demand, “The Father is *in* me.” Jesus undertook

to overthrow the old order of things and to establish the new; it was, consequently, of prime importance, that he should lay before men his authority, by first of all uttering his own consciousness, as to who he believed himself to be, that the men of whom he demanded obedience might judge, whether or not, his acts substantiated his claims. Thus, in order to get at the introspection of Jesus, with this end of evidence in view, we may propound the somewhat bold question, as to;—*What he thought of himself, and who he claimed to be in consequence!* No greater question has ever been asked of men, than that which Jesus himself submitted; “What think ye of the Christ?” Nor can any transcend it, unless we venture to ask what Jesus thought of himself, for the purpose of using his reply, in solving the interrogation which he puts to us. Whatever his self-recognition might be, in other respects, it appears clear from the four Gospels, that again and again he claimed to be God, in the true and proper sense of the word. He asked his disciples, “Whom say ye that I am?” Peter answered, “The Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “This is revealed to thee by my Father who is in heaven.” Again to Philip he said, “He that has seen me has seen my Father also.” But his foes, as well as his

friends, demanded, "Tell us plainly if thou be the Christ." Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." Then they began to stone him as a blasphemer; and he asked, "For which of these good works do you stone me?" They answered, "We stone thee not for a good work but for blasphemy, *because that thou being a man makest thyself God.*" All this shows that both friends and foes understood him to claim that he was God, and his foes laid such a sense upon his words as to expose him to the Jewish death penalty of stoning, for their bold use. When he claimed to be God, all parties clearly understood his claim. In like manner, when Jesus was on trial before the high priest, who, as the highest religious authority, had a right to know exactly what his pretensions were, and who put the most solemn oath to him then known in Jewish jurisprudence, thus; "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God?" With the calmest self-possession he responded, "I am." Immediately, Caiaphas exclaimed, "What need we any further witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What think ye?" Under that appeal they declared him guilty, and decided that he ought to die under their law, because he claimed the prerogatives of God. They understood perfectly, that in speaking of him-

self as he did, he claimed a oneness in knowledge, power and glory, with the Father; an intrinsic affinity with him in essence. He was on trial before the Sanhedrim for his life, and in claiming to be God, he was not only guilty of an audacity, an affrontery, which the blindest and most arrogant enthusiast has never exceeded, but to his pretence he added deliberate perjury, if he were not God. It therefore, follows, that if he were not very God, his humanity no longer stands stainless of egregious vanity and presumption, or even of personal guilt. In that case, the facts stand about thus. Here is a being in the form of a man, having all the appearances and infirmities of flesh and blood, who calls himself God, saying, "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." Now, no man in the history of the world, either before or since, dared to claim that he was God, embodied, incarnated. Men have claimed to represent God, as his instruments and envoys, but no man ever had the ineffable boldness to avow himself openly and distinctly as God, excepting Jesus of Nazareth. In the mouth of any other man born of woman, such a word had been a brazen falsehood. As it was, even his own kinsman became alarmed, and gave him the benefit of a supposed insanity for his round avowal, saying, "He is *beside* him-

self." And, for what imaginable reason should any man set himself up for God, if he knew that he were not? Why, what good could come of such an assumption? An ambitious man who wished to be great, to sieze power, to establish an empire, or even to found a great sect, could not advance such empty effrontery without the danger of exploding his pretentions in a moment. A man who claims to be God must assume to be the corner-stone of all things that exist. One who proclaims himself as God's agent or servant, proclaims something sensible and serviceable, but when he avows himself to be God, he creates difficulties for himself as great as his claims. For, ever after that, all his actions must be the actions of God, in order to prove himself infinite. And, this would be especially true, where the primal law, as in the case of all Jews, thundered out, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Then, when Jesus called himself God, to begin with, he enveloped himself in the most unaccountable difficulties, provided that he were not God. What could his motive be? This question leads us into the very heart of his personal introspection and its results. Did he truly believe that he was God? You must meet the question of his inward sincerity and good faith, right at that point. Now, do you believe that

you are God? Could all the men in the world make you believe that you are God? But he professed to believe that he was God—he died because he professed this—and he died in professing this. Was he sincere, or was he an impostor? We must look that question fairly in the face. Did he really believe his own teaching? Infallible marks attest the sincerity of every true man, and signs equally infallible betray the imposition of every impostor; and all men who claim authority bear the one or the other of these marks. In which of these classes can you justly place Jesus? Can you determine that test in any other way than by the inner life of Jesus himself? And, if not, how will you fix the true type of his moral character? Most certainly, just as you would that of any other intelligent being. You must anatomize the very tissue of his innermost thoughts, in all that constitutes his personal inspection and consciousness. To look at the outer life of Christ alone, is, as when one stands in a valley and beholds the flow of a copious stream, spreading fertility all around. But to look into the inner life of his very heart, is, as when we stand high in the mountain air, and see the live spring come gushing out of the side of the granite itself. It may be profitable here to ask, *How this self-recognition of*

deity dawned upon the Man Christ Jesus, as the result of his searching introspection? Can we attribute the discovery to any mental defect in himself? The very supposition flies directly in the face of the fact, that his intellect was the marvel of humanity, in all that was transparent, profound and sublime. His worst enemies of to-day unite with his ancient foes, in saying, "Never man spake like this man!" The wide empire of his thought has universally excited the wonder of the world, as if thought had never been naturalized in any other mind. Every sentence which he uttered is a master-piece of uniqueness, as well in its literature as in its philosophy and spirituality. There is nothing ill-balanced or embarrassed, feverish or dis-jointed, in his conversations or discourses. He is ever tranquil, measured, exact, pungent and self-possessed. Not only have we the imperial intellect in him, but also its full peer, in the imperial heart. No other man has ever existed who was perfectly equal, an evenly balanced unit in his powers of thought and emotion, much less the highest possible type of both. Our master human minds, generally exhaust themselves completely in the utterance of great thoughts, because the thinking faculty absorbs their whole being. But, while their whole being becomes swallowed up in thought, their

heart is correspondingly impoverished. To this, Jesus is the one mighty exception. Both these declarations are true, namely: that no man ever reached his power of thinking, and yet, no man ever reached his power of loving. Love and light never had such a blending as in him. After a life of ineffable luminousness, he died actually imploring forgiveness on his murderers. The very thought is stupendous, while the feeling is unfathomable. When he speaks, he casts his eye into the infinite heights of revelation, and we soar into its sublimities after him, but when he smiles, he presses us to his bosom, and his tender affection makes our hearts glow while we are folded in his arms. And, as if this were not enough, the most God-like and unconquerable will is also found in him, cooperating with his melting heart and mental sublimity. Just as a helm guides a ship, so this controls his other mighty characteristics. He was absolutely positive in all that he said, and felt, and did. In absolute certainty, he discovered his own sinlessness, looked into his own heart and discovered not the slightest trace of taint there, and in his immaculateness never felt the twinge of remorse, or the shadow of moral obliquity for himself; and therefore, never breathed out one confession of personal wrong-doing, or one prayer for per-

sonal pardon, either of sin or infirmity. So absolutely sure was he that he was without spot, or wrinkle of sin, or any such thing, that he challenged his most unscrupulous foes, demanding, "Which of you convicts me of sin?" With equal decision he claimed to be God, and to be loved, served, and worshipped as God. His consciousness of the truth of this claim was inflexible. Hence, he left it to work out its own results in the most natural way. The fact, that he declined to use any human means in order to assert and maintain his claims as God, is the highest evidence that he never varied in his own mind, for a single hour, from their absolute certainty. The essence of God within him, and his consciousness of the divine nature of his own inner life, became to him the conscious power of his own religion. So perfectly assured was he that his claims were just, that he trusted his internal conviction as the only needful force to send those claims home to human hearts. Few men can bear to look into themselves. Their own discoveries there alarm them. But the introspection of Jesus did not in any way startle him. The inner forces of his breast were the Truth, and so his outer acts were simple and natural. He acted as no impostor, or man of distempered mind could act. When a farmer fills his hand with wheat, what is his

inner consciousness about its growth? That it needs human power, human philosophy, human jurisprudence to insure that growth? Not at all. But, he says, most naturally, "Here is the grain, beneath me is the earth, and above me are the heavens, with their moisture, heat and chemistries, and so, I cast it forth, and sow in hope." Jesus did exactly that same most natural thing. He neither put forth his claims tentatively, nor timidly, so that friends and foes might catch their mere outline, a course which would at once excite inquiry and disarm criticism. But, he launched out his high, abstract demand at once, sharply, and in all its boldness. Like the sower, he went forth full of the good seed, saying to every man whom he met by the wayside, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life," His introspective consciousness left one philosophy to contend with another, and one mental force to battle with another, till the thing of to-day buries the thing of yesterday. He contented himself by sowing the seed of his own absolute convictions, leaving them to spring up anew, first in one breast, and then in another, and another, till man after man came to look upon him as he looked upon himself. Thus, to this day by his own consciousness, he repeats himself still in the convictions of his disciples. All men know what a painful

labor this is to the genius of the greatest artist, who is merely an artist. He has a vision of the beautiful and true in his inner life. Before him, in the lustrous infinitive, he has seized an idea, and made it his own, but its possession torments him day and night. Why is he troubled? Because, he would produce for the eyes and ears of other men, what he has seen and heard with his own. He thirsts to make a piece of canvas, a stone, or an alphabet, express his soul-vision to them, in the same poesy and tone or with the same clearness and force, by which it speaks in himself. Just as long as there is any disparity between his conception and its expression, he is troubled, he remains beneath himself, and weeps over the inefficacy of his own genius, Such is the law of production both in nature and art, and such is the law of conviction in the truth. Hence, Jesus himself, acted under the same law of development which he laid down for others, saying, "To whom much is given, of him will much be required."

His very method of establishing the doctrine of his own deity, therefore, lays bare the soundness of his self-introspection. While the result was, the declaration that, "The Father is in me," yet, he neglected all the methods that any other man would have taken to

insure success in the general admission of this claim. Had ambition swayed him, instead of the inward satisfaction that he was God incarnate, like Mahomet, he would have seized the force of civil power for the enforcement of his ambition. Napoleon caught this very idea, when turning to Count Montholen, on the rock of St. Helena, in his conversation about great men of the ancient world, he demanded, "Tell me who Jesus Christ was." When the Count declined an answer, the great captain replied himself, in the words, "I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man." The public mind of Palestine was excited about Jesus, in the days of his flesh, and he had opportunities enough to call the act of government to his aid, as many who have claimed to be his followers have done. Israel was then rife for revolution, and twice the multitude proposed to make him a King. Amongst the Jews, patriots were constantly rising up, who proposed to shake off the Roman yoke, and, that too, on religious grounds, claiming prophetic authority for the independent, national reign, of the promised Messiah. But he borrowed nothing from their knowledge. He left the mystery of his claim to subsist, by its own force. The originality of his remarks are as marked as the train of his discoveries, making himself

the perfect example of his authoritative demands. He commanded the people of his native land, to “Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s,” while they also render to “God the things that are God’s.” Nay, so far from claiming the chief magistracy of his nation, he spurned all approach to that claim, even predicting the dismemberment and ruin of its venerable nationality. Popularity with the masses is commonly the main-spring of rebellion, but in his popularity, he did two of the most unpopular things that he possibly could do; he claimed to be their God, while he refused to be elected their King. This fact gives you a remarkable view of his own inner consciousness. So firmly fixed was this consciousness to the rightful claim of deity-ship, that he restrained his disciples from all trust in physical power, and prohibited its exercise in his behalf. Their strength was to consist in adoring him. In all their troubles they were to be meek, lowly, and patient, like “lambs.” He rebuked them, when they wished for fire from heaven to consume their opponents, and charged them with ignorance, as to what spirit they were of. In a word, his entire instructions were a protest against the assumptions of regal life, and he more than ratified them, when he turned from all weapons or banners in the field, except a harmless

cross, and from the life of a monarch, to a death by crucifixion. Besides, all this, he used neither philosophy nor science, to create conviction in the minds of men, touching his claim to be believed and trusted as God. He plied no man with such influences. His philosophy was parables, his savants were fishermen. So far from using ordinary scientific wisdom, he first claims to be God and then proposes to die ; and then, further to prove the true consciousness of his introspection, he offers to bind the faith of his followers to himself, by the test of a voluntary resurrection from the dead. Now, was ever any great system of religion, or other mighty institution of thought and feeling, established on the earth, without civil authority or human forces, such as government, or philosophic skill, or scientific aids? Yet, the inner life of Jesus rejected the use of every form of these appliances.

Herein, appears the divinity of the New Testament teaching on this subject. Everywhere it sets forth Christ as an intelligent being, who from eternity into time, and onward again from time into eternity, maintained a continuous knowledge of unbroken identity. Yet, to his human nature when united with the divine, there seems to have been a natural development, from the dawning sense of this

union to its full self-assertion. No knowledge of God can report itself to us from without, but must spring from the bosom of Jehovah himself, as none by "Searching can find out God." Concerning the childhood and youth of Jesus, we know but little. We are told, however, that "The child grew and became strong, being filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him." And, again, that he "Increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men." Mary, his mother, treasured up all the sayings of God, of angels, and men, concerning her Son, and pondered them to her heart. But we have no record of the circumstances which guided his intellectual development, till the time of his public historical appearance, A. D. 29 or 30. Yet, clearly, we do no violence to the analogy of his growth, in other respects; by inferring that his consciousness of his high rank dawned upon him from the depths of his own existence, with the first moments of his high religious life. The first record of this self-recognition is linked with his visit to the temple, at the age of twelve. Doubtless his own soul, when a child and youth, had many times met and pondered upon the momentous questions, "What am I? Who am I? and What is my work?" On this visit to the temple, the clear answer was given. After three days ab-

sence, his mother said to him, "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." He replied, "How is it that ye sought me? Did ye not know that I must be in my Father's house? And they understood not the saying that he spoke to them." But, he fully understood the import of his own words. He had reached a great crisis in his work, when the mysteries of a dozen years were suddenly brought from their hiding place, by the transitions of a moment. As a man, he awakes to the hidden truths that "Joseph is not my father—I am the Son of God—This temple is my Father's house—And where should His Son be, but in His own home?" From that moment, the mysteries of his own life never seem to have saddened or perplexed his thoughts. When that revelation cast its subduing awe athwart his human spirit, all shadowy presentiments fled away forever, for it indelibly drew the line between himself and all others. One beam from the Deity put all inquiry at rest in the calm depths of his human faculties and affections, by penetrating all the problems of his life at a stroke. This genuine, artless, childlike thought, of essential fatherhood in Jehovah, kindled ineffable delight, for the new disclosure had unfolded his life's sacred mystery. Evidently, this hallowed discovery was neither an accident, an in-

stinct, nor an involuntary perception, but a delicate self-discovery, an introspection called forth by the doctrinal discussion between himself and the authorized teachers of the temple. Jean Paul Richter says, “Never shall I forget the inward experience of the birth of self-consciousness, of which I well remember both time and place. I stood one afternoon, a very young child, at the house-door, and looked at the logs of wood piled on the left, when at once that inward consciousness, ‘*I am a Me,*’ came like a flash of lightning from heaven, and has remained ever since.” The difference here is, that Richter discovered his human personality, and Jesus his divine; and that not only in feature and outline, but in full portraiture, by the vivid and warm life of reality and infinity. Here is the reason why the child may tell you that Christianity is the outcome of Christ; and why the wayfaring man knows that Jesus is the “Author and Finisher of his faith.” Here, the visible explains the unseen. St. Paul’s in London, speaks to you of Christopher Wren, and St. Peter’s in Rome, of Michael Angelo, that is, if you read men by their productions; because these temples were built from foundation to dome in the minds of their designers, before one stone was laid upon another. The *ideals* of Rubens or Raphael, overwhelm you

with grief, or wonder, or delight. But the amazement, sorrow, or ecstasy which you feel, were all experienced by their authors before the brush had touched the canvas; the finished creation was hung up in the artist's soul before one stroke revealed it to any other eye. The great Danish sculptor smiled most affectionately upon the huge block of marble which was rolled into his *studio*, and he patted it with glowing tenderness. When asked why? Thorwaldsen answered, "Because in its centre a graceful angel is hidden. I will chisel away this worthless coating but will not scratch a line or a limb." He was honest. Still, it had not occurred to his enthusiastic love of art, that as yet, there was no outer angel of substance in that rough block. Not one whit the less, however, was the transcendent image which brings tears to your eyes as you enter the church of St. Notre Dame in Copenhagen, enshrined in his own mind, in all its gentle perfection; yet no spirit had then seen the enfolded seraph but that of the sculptor himself. And, just as his celestial one must search back of the chisel, the hammer, and the block, for its history, so our divine religion finds its womb far back in the introspections of the breast of Jesus. As all phenomena has its cause, so he is the historical existence of Christianity; for the faith of

nineteen centuries is found neither in his acts nor his words, but in his hidden inner life. If you would master by study, the empires of Cæsar and Napoleon, you must study the lives of Cæsar and Napoleon, internally and externally, for their empires are but the outgrowth of their founders. John Stuart Mill, that clear, cool, apostle of doubt, says, "The life and sayings of Jesus place the Prophet of Nazareth in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius, of whom our species can boast. When this preeminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission, who ever existed upon earth, religion can not be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life." With this remarkable admission before me, then, *What is my argument, to-day, from Christ's self-introspection, that is, from his own discoveries of his inner life?* Simply this. His intelligence was un-
equalled by that of any man who has ever lived; so that he was neither demented nor insane. Then, his heart was as tender as love itself, and his love

was the very sanctuary of chasteness. There was no design about him that savoured of imposture. He was transparently sincere, even the essence of sincerity, so that he believed himself to be absolutely what he professed to be. Unselfishness, humility and measured words, show him to have been sincere. The very attempt to have imposed such an absurdity upon others, would have exhibited him as a vain, empty, shallow pretender, not only conceited but audacious; in a word, a willful impostor, derogatory to Jehovah and abhorrent to men. Skeptics say, that he might have been sincere but mistaken. Then I remind them, not only of his sublime knowledge and perfect guilelessness, but of his deep conviction. What did he believe himself to be? Clearly God. This he declared, privately and publicly, before friend and foe. "Thou, being man, makest thyself God." There was no mistaking this avowal. For this declaration he was tried by an ecclesiastical tribunal, and he died with this affirmation lodged against him. Then, he believed that he was God. Was he a madman, an impostor, or a mere simpleton? But if he were the wisest of all men, he was neither simpleton nor madman, and if the sincerest of all men then no impostor. Being the soul of sincerity, he attempted to deceive no one, being the

wisest of all men, he could not himself be deceived in the matter, so that, he could not believe that he was God without being God. But, if he did not deceive others, and was not deceived himself, then, believing himself to be God he was God. So then, either he was God, and his inner conviction thereof sprang from the depths of his veritable being; or if he were not God, then, he is the greatest miracle in the annals of intelligence, and sincerity, and honesty; for he was the only person who ever believed himself to be God, without being either a cheat or a lunatic! Intelligence, sincerity and conviction, blend here with reality. What say you to these things? Nothing, but what the introspections of Jesus compelled the great French skeptic to say, "If the life and death of Socrates be those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God." Or perhaps, better yet, to say with the apostle Thomas, "My Lord, and my God." Or even better than all, to cast your eye of faith into Christ's inner bosom, and, trusting him for life everlasting, accept and rest upon that self-introspection which led him to exclaim, "I AND MY FATHER ARE ONE. HE IN ME AND I IN HIM." AMEN.

CHRIST'S LAW OF CO-OPERATION.

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“BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS, AND SO FULFIL
THE LAW OF CHRIST.” GALATIANS VI., 2.

If there be a unity of law running through nature, binding our earth with the starry worlds in a common system, linking the lowermost forms of matter with the highest reaches of spirit life, then the simplest discovery of the mineralogist may reveal some secret of the sun's constitution; the most homely obligations of every day disclose the action of a law felt by the angelic hosts of heaven. Every prosaic bit of duty may thus be a segment of the eternal line of beauty, along which the life of God sweeps in rhythmic order through the infinitude of being.

The text brings before us a simple, practical obligation, in realizing the full significance of which we follow the Apostle's upward vision into the high

relationships of which it is the partial expression. "Bear ye one another's burdens, *and so fulfil the law of Christ.*"

Bearing one another's burdens,—sympathy carried into action, feeling together becoming acting together, co-operation,—is the fulfilment of the law of highest life, the law of Christ. There is no written law to that effect, the transcript of some word of command given by Christ. Rather the Apostle saw in helpful association that which was the true realizing in all mutual relationships of the truth personated in Christ, of the spirit breathing through Christ. "The truth as it is in Jesus" is the ultimate truth of every sphere of living. Christ is the world's interpreter. The sublime vision of the same apostle is the key to the interpretation of creation: "In Him all things consist," stand together, orderly group themselves into a perfect unity. St. John saw this same principal truth,—"in the beginning was the Word," the perfect expression of the Divine Mind; One in whom all the after evolutions of creation stood *involved*, of whom they must therefore all be partial expressions, through whom their secret laws must be read; the first-born of every creature, the prototype of all life, as St. Paul elsewhere in Platonic phraseology expressed it.

I understand then, the Apostle to hint the truth that this duty of bearing one another's burdens is the application in social relationships of the law under which all things 'consist' in Christ,—helpful association, and so through the narrow lense of this every-day duty we range the infinite circuit of an universal law.

Following this hint of the Apostle we are to look to find the secret of social science shadowed in the realms below, revealed in the perfect man; one simple law binding all creation—"the law of the spirit of life in Jesus Christ."

I. Nature testifies all through her domains to the presence of this law of Christ. The Mosaic account of creation is of an order emergent from chaos. If the picture is of the very beginning of things, then chaos represents the primal, structureless, unorganized matter out of which was developed the manifold inter-relationships which constitute the beautiful order; separate actions being evolved, and all these bound together in chemical and vital co-operation. If the vision be that of the beginning of our present order, then chaos represents the state of anarchy, into which previous aeons had lapsed, in which matter existed in all the essential constituents which now bless us in the sunshine and the dew, the soil

and the air, but uncombined, separate and isolate atom from atom, inter-penetrated by no forces of association,—matter's shadowing of selfishness; within which the overbrooding of the spirit of God, quickened life, developed reciprocal relations, associated activities in the atomic individualities, and thus the new earth came to the birth.

Chaos was matter with no inter-relationships, no mutual combinations. Creation was matter brought under the law of helpful association, acting together in physical, chemical and vital co-operations, and thus "very good."

A true symbol this poem-picture of the earth's development. Science deciphers the law of Christ in terms of physics.

Inanimate nature knows no independence, no refusal of mutual co-operation, save in anarchy. Helpfully-associative the earth atoms shine in the jewel or mantle the mountain majesty with the tenderness of the lichen and the grass; standing out each for and by itself, unhelpful, unassociative, they are trampled under foot in the slime of the roadside. Every further vision of science is the revelation of more marvelous out-reachings, more infinitely delicate actions of this law of all creation. No unlikeness of material, no remove of space,

isolates ~~one~~ part of nature from another. In beautiful harmony, in silent peaceful order, cloud and sea, earth and air, mountains and plains, forests and fields, burning deserts and frozen tracts of either pole, help each the other's work for the common good, a mysterious inter-play of influences, an endless miracle of law. The infinitude of space escapes not the omnipresence of this law which makes every outer-most orb in the sphered heavens conscious of the little world hid under the light shadow of its burning sun; the waters of our earth rise and fall beneath the influences no subtlest analysis can resolve, forth-flowing from the distant moon, our very height depends upon the number and distance of stars our eyes see not, no telescope discloses. So infinitely delicate this law, that the drooping form of the hare bell may not poise itself in graceful curve without the adjustment of the mass of the earth to its gravity.

We advance in creation. What do we mean by "life," but the unity and inter-action wherein and whereby, the members of the organism work all together in mutual sympathy, mutual purpose; its manifold activities co-ordinated in the law of helpfulness to a common end.

An organism is a body whose separate functions

are co-operative. Life is associated action. Death is the return to the separateness and isolation of the primal chaos, wherein there is no longer responsive, sympathetic help of each part by the other. Again there are only these two states, life and death, the presence and the absence of the law of helpful association. The failure of this law over any member or function of the organism is decomposition, the setting up of independent action in the body. The ultimate anarchy of the grave, in all its horror of decaying flesh and rioting worms is but the escape of the body from the power of the law which kept these always present activities in healthful subordination to associated action, the dechéance of the regnant life and the mob law of individual action set up in every part of the corpse.

Purity lies in association; impurity, corruption, death, in each member's acting by and for itself. Healthfulness is but the responsive helpfulness of every function, the reverse of which is disease, interruption of the mutual helpfulness, withdrawal of some action needful for the common weal. The circulating medium rushes to the head instead of diffusing itself over the body, and there is apoplexy. A local life is set up in some point, and this independent cell taxes the trade passing through

the arteries to feed itself, and the cancer grows that finally kills the corporate life. Roots and veins and bark and leaves, each part of the tree helps the others, or ceasing to help, we say it dies. The dead skin, the dead bark, are but parts of the body no longer responsive to the organic law. The old fable of the quarrel in the body is the true story of life. It is under the law of Christ, "bear ye one another's burdens." Life is co-operation of the organic forces, association in helpfulness, a working together of the functions which divides the burdens and shares the benefits—the reciprocal relations of a common wealth.

The scale of life is to be admeasured by the sway of this law of co-operation. It is weakest in the lowest forms of life; it becomes more dominant as life ascends in dignity. The struggle for existence may be the law which first masters chaos into the rudiments of order and makes possible the survival of the fittest. But it is everywhere ranked by the law of helpful association as life foreshadows human nobleness. The ant-hill and the bee-hive are animal co-operative societies, lesser Brook Farms and New Lebanons. The full life interprets all the lower forms.

Jesus Christ explains nature as the flower ex-

presses the secret of the roots and leaves. There is a unity of law through the whole development of life. It is all under the law of Christ, "bear ye one another's burdens."

II. Rising another step, we behold the larger sweep of this same law through the complex workings of the social mechanism. What do we mean by *society* but the orderly co-hesion of individuals, the bringing of separate aims and interests, wills and habits under relationships of common welfare. Barbarism is the state wherein each man is by and for himself; or, since there must be some relationships to preserve and perpetuate existence, the state wherein each family or clan or tribe stands apart in isolation from all others. The slow work of creating society is the constituting and organizing of inter-relationships, the making of one family to have a common concern with another in the maintenance of order, of one industry to supplement another; is the calling forth of functions, the peculiar power of organic life, and the assigning to each a special task for the common weal. In savage life, each man is farmer and shepherd and fisher and hunter and soldier for himself. In society each of these functions is discharged by a class. The development of society being, according to the canon of evolution, a process whereby a

simple state becomes ever-increasingly complex, the inter-relations of modern society are becoming more involved than ever heretofore. Independence is an impossibility excepting in the hermit's hut amidst the mountain woods. The newspaper laid each morning on your breakfast table might be a daily sermon upon this text, if you would pause to think of the vast combinations of activities of men, women and children, in city and country, in study and field and mine and ship, by which alone that sheet is placed before you. Increasingly still this multiplication of inter-relationships must go on, between individuals and classes and nations. The ideal society has found no better symbol than that form of free order which the genius of Greece bequeathed, which the poetry of revelation seized, wherewith to type the oncoming perfect social state, through which we see the Beautiful City coming down from God out of heaven upon earth. The Utopia for which good men long, dreamers sigh, mad-men fight over fired palaces and barricaded streets, will come in upon the earth as the members of the universal body politic are drawn out of their local, individual and selfish activities of rivalry into a commonwealth; as sympathy of feeling is taught by the heart and identity of interests is discerned by the

head, and individuals, classes and nations combine in associative helpfulness, to realize a true community.

General language of this sort may pass unchallenged, but its translation into the vernacular of the street and the exchange will betray at once how far indeed the world is from owning this law of Christ. Eighteen centuries have not taught men the significance and application of this truth in Jesus. Only of late have our eyes been opening to see that, after all our theorizings and experimentings, the secret of social science was of old given to those who had ears to hear, in the life and words of Christ; that indeed there are not two Gods, one giving law to the church, the other to the world; one ordaining the golden rule, the other setting up the brazen rule; one bidding men be brotherly, the other sanctioning selfishness under any of its decent disguises as the condition of success; but that over all life stands this universal law of the One Living God, the ordainer of nature's system, the orderer of human society; the law revealed fully in Him who is God manifest in the flesh—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Here we are still trying to perfect our civilization in the defiance of that law, our systems of so called social science, until lately framing themselves on the idea

of competition, i. e. selfish strife, and our business world working on this as the alone law of industrial success. I need not tell you, men of business, how truly this is the accepted belief of the world of trade. It is a huge struggle, at times a wild and fearful struggle, in which Ishmael-like every man's hand is against his brother. It is the strife for existence transferred from the lower spheres to the realm of human life ; each man vying with his neighbor, out-advertizing, under-selling, getting before him in one way or another ; each man competing for the public favor at the expense of some other man. You may blind your eyes to the fact, but that fact is under all your daily tradings, the basic belief of business, that trade is a strife, a struggle between capital and labor, brains and brawn, buyer and seller, in which one makes and another loses, the loss of one constituting the gain of the other. So it really is, as you do business, one mounting on another's fall, one filling his pockets out of another's emptyings. The sign in which you triumph is Libra, an ever see-sawing balancing of gain and loss, in which every man's endeavor is to keep the scale well down at his end, regardless of who kicks the beam at the other end. "Every one for himself and the devil take the hindmost," is the rule by which

we run the race we set before us, and so fulfil the law—not exactly of Christ. The happy result of our “practical” wisdom is that God’s school of character has become the devil’s house of debauchery, where, day by day, virtue is seduced and conscience prostituted that bread may be won.

Between classes this anarchic confusion is accepted as the normal order of things. The existing relations of Capital and Labor present largely the very opposite of any helpful association, an undisguised hurtful antagonism. Political economists have taught the world that the interests of Capital and Labor are necessarily adverse; Capital’s interest being to keep wages as low as possible, Labor’s being to force them up as high as could be attained; profits representing a sliding scale which inclines towards the employer as labor is cheapened, to the employee as capital is driven back along the line of gain; the normal level being preserved by this balancing of interests. Capital has naturally not been slow in practising this convenient belief. Employers have fallen back upon the axiom of business—we are not expected to pay more than we must. To keep the market price of labor low has been unblushingly avowed as the aim of Capital, even though that low price of labor meant, as it always must

mean, low life in every respect, low health from poor and insufficient food, low intelligence, low morale. In poor times employers would close mills and turn their vassels out to care for themselves, more merciless in this, as owning no bond but contract between master and servant, than the slave-owner of yore. Labor has been no slower in learning from this "tyranny of capital" its relation to the power employing it. It has had no interest in the master's work beyond the contract. That work was therefore to be done uninterestedly, i. e. badly. A union of Labor's forces must be made to raise wages, or prevent reductions. Trade Unions grew up, combining employees into a vast host, hostile to the employing class. Strikes became the recognized tactics of Labor, answered back by Capital with lock-outs. A so called Christian civilization has thus found the normal order of society a strife of force under the inspiration of selfishness. As Capital has been the stronger party heretofore, such human and Christian results as these are seen: In England a vast stratum of pauperism growing below the fair surface in direct ratio to the increase of wealth and culture above; in France, Labor in deadly antagonism towards the upper classes, a slumberous volcano just now but within half a decade having belched forth the hell-flames of "the

Commune;" in our own land, a feud intensifying year by year, embittering employers, degrading laborers, disordering all industries and trades, frightening away Capital, and thus impoverishing labor, with the usual results in the latter class, the thrusting down into the nether-most abysses of pauperism, vice and crime of an ever-growing host. The past summer has witnessed an actual war of such magnitude and such portentous significance, that even the blindest eyes should at last open to discern the explosive forces of discontent underlying our social structure. This alarming outburst should astonish no one who has watched the tendencies of our business world. It was simply the logical outcome, in one direction, of the doctrines of political economy preached and practised in our Christian land, the avowal of war frankly put into a somewhat rough form.

And if thus it has been as to individual and class relations, it cannot be expected to have proven otherwise of inter-national relations. These too, have rested upon undisguised hostility, each nation looking upon its neighbor with the eye of a rival, in its skill and treasure so much adverse power being seen. The mutual attitude is suspicion, the mutual effort to draw territory or trade from one another, to

weaken and cripple each the other. The hostility which is masked between individuals and classes is openly acknowledged between nations, and the Christian world to-day is busy waging war or making ready for it.

In every sphere the norm of society would appear, from our accepted theories and our actual practice, to be chaos, anarchic atoms repelling each other and thus preventing combination in stable forms; no beautiful order emergent from the strife of interests, no dawn as yet of those good times for which the weary world has vainly waited through the ages.

The inter-relationships of society becoming ever more delicate, if their action is always to be friction, the strain upon the social mechanism must grow too severe to be endured. The law of competition, drawing its vitality from selfishness, arraying man against man, class against class, nation against nation, can, of itself, only evolve anarchy, decomposition, dissolution, death. If the forces of society are those of repulsion, the end is plain. That was a terrible saying of Frederick Harrison, in reviewing the causes leading to the Communal war:—"The people of Paris believe not in any God nor in any man. But they have a religion of their own for which they are ready to die. That religion is the faith that Capital and its

holders must adapt themselves to nobler uses, or they had better cease to exist." That is the conclusion "the masses" are learning to draw from the practical workings of our theories of the relations of Capital and Labor.

Of course there is a certain truth underlying our ordinary notions. Competition is a principle of absolute necessity in social development. It has wrought immense advantages for mankind. But it must be ranked by a higher law to keep its forces from tearing the social mechanism in pieces. I hail it as the one hopeful sign that in all lands and amongst all classes, men are being drawn to perceive that the deepest secret of society lies not in strife but in peaceful union, not in the selfish seeking of individual interests; but in the brotherly working together for mutual welfare, not in hurtful antagonism, but in helpful association, not in competition, but in co-operation; that men are learning that each man's true interests are in each other's best interests, the lasting success of one bound up with the promotion of his fellow's good; man with man, class with class, nation with nation, rising or falling together, private wealth secure only in a common-wealth. This is not sentiment. It is the soundest, simplest philosophy, which, thank God,

is beginning to be preached from chairs of political economy and from the press as well as from the pulpit.

Our workingmen are discerning that arbitration is more profitable than strikes, our capitalists perceiving that co-operation in some form pays better in the long run than mere hired labor. Labor is becoming willing to bear the burden of Capital's loss in dull times and put up with lowered wages or half work. Capital is becoming willing to bear the burden of Labor's necessities in hard times and keep the work going to give support to the workingmen.

Our statesmen are learning sounder theories of international relations than those which found the wealth of one people in the poverty of another, a better arbiter of differences than war.

And it is all but reading "the law of Christ," "bear ye one another's burdens," the law of *helpful association*.

Yes truly "the law of Christ," the law of His whole life, of all His revelation of the Father, of all His example to man. That whole life was the incarnation of this spirit. It was the living amongst us of One who knew no self-interest, had no self-thought, but found His joy in the good of others; a Divine living commentary on the law of brotherly helpfulness. "I am among you as one that

serveth,"—there is the dignity of Christ. "The Son of Man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister,"—there is the vocation of Christ. "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's he shall find it,"—there is the economy of Christ. "My joy, therefore, is fulfilled,"—there, all stained with the blood sweat of Gethesemane's bearing of a world's burdens, rises the blessedness of Christ. Jesus Christ! what was He, *is* He still, but as we call Him in sacredest moments "the Savior." And what is that salvation but this law, "bear ye one another's burdens," operative even over Him who to help us into life "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses," bearing our sins in His own body on the tree;" the law of salvation, "Vicariousness,"—only another and less familiar term for the good old home-word of our mother Saxon, helpfulness;—Christ's stooping beneath the burdens of earth's woes, sharing the sorrows of earth's sin to help us back and up to God; and so our bearing one another's burdens, and thus fulfilling, carrying out into full realization, the law of Christ, in a Church where all men own the bond of brotherhood, the germ-cell of the redeemed humanity, wherein individuals and classes and nations are to be co-ordinated in friendly ranks of helpful associa-

tion; and wherein there shall come to pass the vision once seen for a moment in the days of the first fresh life of Christian brotherliness, its spirit though in sounder form, when "all that believed were together and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all as any one had need."

And so the revelation of God in Christ is the Trinity, the perfect inter-relationship of the fulness of life, wherein God comes forth to help man, and whereunto now ascendeth from the angelic choirs above, and soon from the human antephon below there shall respond the everlasting worship, "Holy, holy, holy Lord, God *of hosts*," the ordered ranks of life in heaven above and in the earth beneath.

III. Let us not leave this high thought without deducing from the general law some practical bits of every day duty.

Let me say to you, my friends, who are in business, your Christian vows call upon you to try whether you cannot carry on your daily avocations on some higher plane than that of the selfish strife whose din is in your ears at every turn. Your Christian calling is scarcely to crowd off the great burden of bread-winning from your own shoulders upon those of some weaker brained or weaker bodied brother, rival

tradesman or poor employee, under-selling the one and beating down the wages of the other. As a pagan you might perhaps own the world's maxim, — "shove ye off every man his burden on one another." As a Christian, your law is "*bear* ye one another's burdens," brains helping brawn, wealth helping poverty out from under the crushing load of want. If you are a sincere Christian you must try to conduct your business by this law of Christ, not making all you can for yourself and growing rich while you leave those by whose labor you mount to comfort and ease, to struggle on under the burden of poverty. The Christian rise is that which draws up Labor after Capital to higher planes of living. To grow rich honestly is a good pagan commendation; to grow rich in a brotherly fellowship of gain with all who work below you, this and this alone is a Christian success. Is this quixotic talk? Well, friends, it is only what each one learned long ago concerning "my duty towards my neighbor." In the confirmation by your own will of the life laws declared in baptism, you professed to believe that "my duty towards my neighbor is to love him as myself, and to do unto all men as I would they should do unto me." In your nearest neighborhood you are bounden to live in this helpful association, this sharing of your other

self's burdens. You will find no nearer neighbors than "the hands" who outwork the enterprises the headship of your capital feeds and directs. A rush of the golden stream to the head, to capital, leaves these "hands" thinly blooded. The apoplexy we have seen in society the last few years, the bursting of so many capitalists might warn you that like all the other laws of God, this law of Christ cannot be safely disregarded.

No organism is in healthful growth that does not build up in due ratio of increase the whole body. No business is sound that does not cause the "hands" to share in the increase of the head. If our rail-roads had treated their employees as something more than hands hired for so many hours work a day, had interested them in the gains of their company, to however small an extent, had provided for their support in case of the accidents to which they are liable, and for the support of their families in the event of their death therefrom, binding them in interest and loyalty to the road, instead of leaving them to bind themselves together in mutual support against the road, would they have incurred such losses and run such risks as this summer brought upon them?

Do you say in what way am I to fulfil this law of

Christ and bear the burdens of those others who are bound up with me in a common labor? It is not for me to detail schemes. That is the province of the political economist. It is mine as an interpreter of the higher laws of life to indicate principles. This principle is CO-OPERATION. It is no dream of the sentimentalist, for hard headed political economists, one and all, are uniting in the declaration that it is the alone key to the problem of the relation of Capital and Labor. It is no book theorem, for it is in actual operation in multitudes of forms in our land and in other lands, in the spheres of production and distribution, in manufactures and in trades. Under all the various forms assumed, one principle is the life force of these reconstructed businesses. PARTNERSHIP. That is to say fellowship of the members of the body, in which all the members gain in the wealth of the head, and share its losses. It may be only by a certain percentage of profit accruing to the workmen over and above his wages, or it may be by the employees being taken representatively into the councils as into the gains of the employer. In whatever form, the principle is that of identifying the interests of the employees with those of the employer, the effects of which, wherever fairly tried, are harmony between Capita

and Labor, elevation of the laborer, sounder if slower wealth to the capitalist.

Few sights in this hard world are more beautiful than the almost paternal relationship some noble men have really instituted towards their industrial vassals, as through the fellowship created by the out-working of this principle these Christian heads have been enabled to lift their hands to higher manhood and womanhood. I am more and more persuaded that the only way to uplift the poor is through natural relationships, the Divine ordinations for associating intelligence and ignorance, wealth and want; the bonds of business wherein it is given to power of brain and purse to exercise a mastership which can realize Carlyle's Captaincy of Industry, and organize labor so as to make work what God meant it to be, the school of character. But the absolute condition of that mastership is the trust and loyalty which rise alone towards him who seeks to fulfil that duty to his neighbor which the neighbor at least never fails to discern.

The absence of this spirit in our money-mad age is eating out human brotherhood in the core of all social relations, business; its restoration will begin to build the better order. Will you, my friends, in your own business relations try to put into opera-

tion this principle of bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ?

All of us in whatsoever spheres of life our days round their appropriate cycle may find room to out-work this law of Christ.

Those of you, my friends, to whom God has given of His treasures, the gold and the silver which are His, need ever to bear in mind this Christly law of life. There are thousands in this very city who go through life oppressively, staggering under burdens of which you know perhaps only through the novels you read, lolling upon your comfortable lounges. There are Christian works crushing those who are bravely sustaining them. O what burdens ye could ease without shouldering any oppressive weight yourselves; loads of care and anxiety, of want and suffering, of sickness and infirmity, of responsibility and labor! What lightened hearts and freed lives ye could call in blessing round you, would you with a little personal thought, a little active sympathy, bear one another's burdens! Nor need we wait for wealth or leisure to follow the Master in this burden-bearing. Few are there with whom we meet day by day, who may not be eased of some burden if only our eyes were quick to read the faces of our brothers, and our hearts quick to radiate that

blessed smile of love which strengthens in its warmth. And helped too, without officious intrusion or loquacious consolation, by the pressure of the hand or the gentleness of the voice, the felt sympathy of soul with soul, the bearing on another's heart and mind in love and thought of the burden, be it what it may. Love lightens by sharing. When we feel another lifting the other end of our burden in gentle sympathy, the shoulders are eased, if only for the moment, and can brace themselves to the load again more bravely. Only for all this we must daily breathe the prayer of that sweet hymn of Mrs. Waring:

“ I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles
And to wipe the weeping eyes ;
And a heart at leisure from itself
To soothe and sympathize.

“ The law of Christ,”—so with all its imperative-ness, a duty not a choice, a blessed obligation you may evade but cannot annul, the necessity of all life in Christ, I leave this command, “ bear ye one anothers burdens.”

“ If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His.”

THE LIFE OF CHRIST THE PROOF OF HIS DIVINE REVELATION.

REV. EDWARD A. WASHBURN, DD.

TEXT:—"THAT WHICH WAS FROM THE BEGINNING, WHICH WE HAVE HEARD, WHICH WE HAVE SEEN WITH OUR EYES, HAVE LOOKED ON, AND OUR HANDS HAVE HANDLED OF THE WORD OF LIFE, DECLARE WE UNTO YOU."—
I EP. JOHN, I, 1.

What think ye of Christ? is the question which the restless mind of our time still asks, as it did at the first coming of the Saviour. We answer it with the word of his apostle. As we read again this confession of faith, it takes us back to the earliest Christian day, when the religion of the Son of God was not an abstract opinion, but a heartfelt reality. It was in reply to the errorists just appearing at the close of the apostolic age, who denied the manhood of Jesus, on the ground that a divine person could not suffer on the cross, that St. John defends the Gospel; he gives them no metaphysical arguments; he points to Him who had walked on

earth, whose truth they had heard from His own lips, and whose sinless grace they had seen with their own eyes.

I take these words as the best opening of my subject. The personal life of Jesus Christ is the great evidence of His divine revelation. It is to show the bearing of this view, alike on the belief and unbelief of our time I propose. If Christianity be a reality for us, it must have a positive truth amidst the changes of opinion. It may have many questions of critical science, which lie open to our growing knowledge, but it is not in itself a speculative system. It rests on a fact of human history. The life of Him whom the faith of eighteen centuries has worshipped as the Son of God and the Saviour, whom even the unbelief, that denies the New Testament, reveres as the most wonderful of all who have won humanity, this is its foundation. This is its abiding power. It is this which now speaks to the mind and heart of mankind, as when He dwelt on the earth; and it is only as we have learned this fact in its full meaning that our creed is reality.

But I have a further purpose. I believe that here is to be found the true method of defence against the error of our own time. I shall hereafter dwell more fully on its theories, but I wish only at the

outset to show its ground. It must be clear to any, who has studied the tone of modern thought, that we have no longer to deal with the old questions of theology, with abstract reasonings of the nature of Christ, of substance and will, but with a far more searching criticism, which doubts not only His divinity, but the fact of any divine revelation at all. There is one principle at the root of this unbelief in whatever form it appears. It claims to set aside all supernatural religion, as at war with the laws which science has fixed in nature and human history. Christianity in its eyes is only one among the outgrowths of the past, which has indeed much of pure moral teaching, but is in its historic character a legend only. And thus its chief study has been directed toward the person of Jesus Christ. We are to place Him beside the noblest names of history, a Confucius, a Sakya-muni; nay, above them in some features of His life; but that life has no more for us than this passing interest, and must fade away in the larger religion of humanity. Such is the ground of our latest critics. It is here I wish to meet it. To many this assault on the very citadel of Christianity seems to forebode its ruin. But I hold the very opposite. If such be the position of modern unbelief, we should know

that it cannot be fully answered by our old theological definitions. We have too often injured the cause of Christian truth by identifying it with past systems; and made it to many minds an unreal religion for the need of to-day. We must confront the error with the living truth of history. We must show that the Gospel is not one of the transient faiths of the past, but supplies the wants of the race. It is in the life of Jesus Christ we are to find that evidence. I offer here no new idea, rather I may gladly say the leading thought of our most earnest thinkers, and my only claim is to present it as it meets directly the issue between belief and unbelief. If I can so urge it, I trust that I may reach the mind and heart of some who are asking sincerely for a positive truth amidst the strifes of the time.

Let us, then, open the Gospels with one plain purpose. Let us put ourselves back, so far as we can, into the very time when there were no written lives of our Lord, when Christianity was no religion, known only as it has come down to us through ages of theological strife, and look upon this wonderful Person as they did who saw him begin to teach and heal in Judea. We have still that short historic record: "And Joseph went up from

Galilee out of Nazareth into Judea, to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife. And she brought forth her first-born son." Amidst the imperial annals of Rome, that birth in a small corner of the East is utterly unknown, yet on it hangs the welfare of the world. This life reaches only three and thirty years, and of these thirty are in the lowly household of Nazareth. We see him come forth in manhood as a teacher in the neighborhood of his own home; he gathers a few followers like himself, without wealth or social rank, and preaches the kingdom of God; his glad tidings of a divine grace, his holy life, his works of healing, draw around him many of the people, but the hatred of the Jewish theocracy is kindled against him, until at length the strife is ended. He goes up to Jerusalem as the Messiah, is betrayed, and dies on the cross.

Such is the short story of the Gospels. It stands there in these simple human features. Yet it is the claim of this Teacher of Nazareth that He was in a sense beyond all others the personal Son of God and Saviour of men. It is the claim which has been acknowledged by the great body of his believers from the first until now. This is the problem. And now we are to look at the qualities, clear, historic, undeniable, which make this Person, this life in such

wondrous contrast with the outward conditions. I shall not, in entering on such a study, take for granted any of those parts of the written life yet in question among critics, as the theological style of the fourth gospel, or the differing genealogies, but the features common to all the Evangelists. Nor shall I, again, place foremost the miracles of the New Testament. Although I hold that they have their rightful place in the whole view of a divine revelation, yet I cannot rest its chief defence on them. Nay, it is because they have been so put forward, that science has been brought into its mistaken conflict with faith. If Christianity be the religion of the Son of God, it must find its best proof in His character. Indeed, it is to my mind one of the most striking facts of His life, that the miracles are only in a very few instances claimed as evidence of His mission, but are wrought for the healing of the sick, the feeding of the hungry, so that their true worth as "signs" or "mighty powers" is as visible fruits of His love, which spring up in the pathway of so divine a Being. It is not the lesser miracles that prove Him; it is He, the living miracle, who makes us believe in them.

We turn, then, to the character of this Person, who claims to be the Son of God, and we look at it

in its intellectual and moral features. It is as the Teacher He comes forward at the opening of His mission. We have in these Gospels the gathered words of this Prophet of Nazareth. At best there are only a few scattered discourses, spoken by the sea of Galilee, in the Temple, the street, or among His disciples; and embodied in writing after His death, as they had been kept in the hearts of His friends. Yet we can gain from them the clearest portrait of His revelation. If we should even allow with a late critic, Mr. Arnold, that we can only know the original sayings of the Lord, as they are obscured through the dense medium of Evangelists who partly understood him, we have a more wonderful fact. All agree in the essential claim. Matthew and Mark and Luke, as well as the beloved disciple, declare the Son of God, who alone reveals the Father. The Sermon on the Mount has the same spiritual teaching as the discourses of the fourth Gospel. The "mind of Christ" cannot be hid by the human weakness of His biographers. What is the sand compared with the nuggets of gold? What criticism can break the unity of that truth, which binds together these Gospels, in spite of their unlikeness of style or method? And what then is this essential truth? It is that God has revealed his grace as a Father in Him; has made all

men children in one redeemed family, partakers in a life of holiness, and heirs of life everlasting. This is His revelation. It is no system of speculative doctrine. It is not as another Rabbi that Jesus comes to upbuild a later school. Yet all the deepest ideas that the human mind craves as the end of its knowledge, of God, of the conscience, of the nature of the soul, of moral or social law, of the destiny of the race, are summed in His teaching. The intellect of the world has acknowledged in Him the highest Master of wisdom. If we measure the mind of Jesus Christ by any of the great thinkers in science or letters, a Plato in pure thought, a Humboldt or a Shakespeare, while we bow before their undying power, not one holds the same supremacy over the race. All schools of Christian learning have grown out of His words; all theology, art, poetry, have found their inspiration here. Nay, even those who scout His authority are witnesses to His intellectual mastery; for they still sound the same problems that Christianity opened, and waste their wit to shape a newer Gospel, yet their systems wither, and His word does not pass away.

But it is not only in this might over the intellect of men that the mind of Christ has such supremacy. It is, on the contrary, the wonderful character of

this Gospel, that it always takes us back from the subtleties of all our systems to its living simplicity. Theology may weave its theories of substance, and its forensic view of atonement. But we go from them all to the heartfelt word: "I am in my Father, and He in Me, and I in you." "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do what I command you." Where is the most unlettered man, who can only read his Bible in his own mother tongue, to whom He does not give the same light as to an Augustin, or a Butler in his library? His homely parables, his childlike teachings of God, or duty, are a daily bread of life. And what then shall explain this universality, this fitness of the Gospel for all the wants of mind or heart? I can give but one answer. It is because the truth made known in this Saviour of men, the revelation of God as our Father in the personal love of His Son, is that which solves all the riddles of our history, makes us children instead of blind seekers of an unknown cause, tells us that all are one brotherhood in Christ, that our life is an education into personal and social holiness, and the seed of our undying existence. But not only this. We cannot divide the Revealer of this Gospel from it, and make him only a human sage. If we do this, we say in

the same breath that He who could speak such a message was a self-deluded dreamer. It is His claim that He is not only the messenger of such a truth, but is in His own person the Truth and Way and Life. We see in the wisdom He reveals the very proof of His claim; we know in Him the light of the world. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life!"

And thus I pass to the next, the yet greater feature of His character. The person and life of the Lord are the perfect type of that holiness which the moral nature of man strives after, yet has never reached save in Him. It is no ideal fancy we have portrayed in the Gospels, but the history of one who knew our lot of struggle, of temptation, and trod its hardest road. Yet it stands absolutely alone in its purity. Few, even of those who have disbelieved His higher claim, have dared cast a slur on His sinless character; but rather it has been the fashion in this day of most searching criticism to speak of Him as the ideal of human goodness. Follow then that life at every step from childhood to manhood. It is a growth without a flaw. There is nothing of that battle of flesh with spirit, that slow curbing of the selfish aims, that painful conquest of goodness we see in others, but the growth which should be ours

if no taint of evil had weakened our nature. But not only is it a sinless life we gaze on; it is the union of all graces that are severed in others. We see in Him the tenderness of woman, with the strength of manhood; the love of friends, the love of His Jewish race, yet the largest kinship with every form of humanity, every lot of suffering; the heart seemingly born for the still happiness of home, yet the self surrender of the martyr. There is no one-sidedness, but a wonderful harmony. None has more of personality, yet without a shade of the individual weakness which cleaves to even the best. I know there are those who, while they acknowledge this in general, have sought to find some blemishes in His life. It has been said that he was an ascetic, but we need only enter the home at Bethany, or see him by the grave of Lazarus to know how strange is such a charge. It has been said that he gave way at times to anger, when he heaped fiery words on the Pharisees, and drove the money changers from the temple. But who can mistake that righteous wrath against sin for the outburst of a selfish passion? Yet I need not dwell on these poor cavils. I will only name one remaining objection, because it has been so ingeniously urged by some later critics. It is said that at the best we have only a slight sketch in these Gos-

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pels; a life almost silent for thirty years, and after that but fragmentary. What can we know of the weaknesses, which even so pure a person may have shared with other men? We may find enough in Him for our deepest reverence, but we cannot call Him perfect. Yet it should be clear, I reply, that to deny the known because of the unknown, is to destroy all evidence. What is there wanting to a full, unclouded portrait of His mind or heart? If aught be hid from us, it is not that the character is imperfect, but so perfect that even His nearest disciples could only give us a human transcript of His holiness. To find imaginary flaws is not to read the Gospels with an honest mind. If we study this life as it is on the simple page, it remains the sinless miracle of all time. Place by the side of Jesus Christ all the purest men who have won the homage of the race, a Confucius, a Socrates, yet each has some blemish which mars his virtue, and his highest grace has been a growth through struggle. Gather all of Christian name, even those who came nearest their Lord in the first age, yet we know that human effort with God's grace could make a John, a Paul, but not a Christ; and when we read the biography of the saintliest since, a Kempis, a Fenelon, a Herbert, a Leighton, all are but single, broken rays of

this white light; all confess themselves sinful men, whose goodness has been borrowed from their perfect Master.

We have thus studied the two features of mental and moral perfection which make the character of Jesus Christ at once so human, yet so above the height of mankind. But we have now to join them in that, which gives them their complete reality. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. We know that such a Being, so wise, so holy, has not only walked on this earth, but that His life has entered into the whole life of our humanity. And here we open that historic view, which unfolds the nature of His kingdom, and meets the keenest criticism brought against the biography of the Gospels. It is the charge of the modern theist that Christianity is a book-revelation; that while its moral truth abides, yet as a historic fact it must be ranked with the faded legends of the past. I have no wish to deny, that the truth of Christianity has too often been so identified with the verbal infallibility of Scripture, as to lay its defenders open to the charge of Bibliolatry. But I take no such position. Christianity is not a book; it is a life. If the character we have studied be what we have maintained, we cannot so dismiss it. It is of the very nature of

this history that it is not a record of one event in the changeful tide of human things, but is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. Look, then, anew at this religion born with its Author into the world. What is the life of Jesus Christ? Is it only the biography of three and thirty years we have before us? Is it only the legend of wonders, which happened eighteen hundred years ago in a corner of Syria, over which our antiquaries bend as they do over a monkish chronicle? What is the life of Jesus Christ? It is the history of a religion left by His own design in the form of a social fellowship, which should witness His truth and power among men. That household of Christ is the organic seed-vessel that holds the whole after growth. Pass now from the short personal career of this teacher of Galilee, and the grander miracle begins. We yet read its first chapter with wonder. This religion of twelve poor, unlettered Jewish fishermen, the hated sect of the Nazarene, the "execrable superstition" of a Tacitus, after the death of the Master on the cross, where all hope seemed crucified with Him, rises at once in a newborn body; this church, built on the faith in a risen Christ, which the sharpest of our destructive critics has called "a pious illusion," during the lifetime of the apostles passes from its

Hebrew infancy to its conscious mission as teacher of the Gentile world ; this church, with no weapons save its truth and holiness, against the allied might of Pagan empire, philosophy, culture, idolatry, mounts in three centuries to the throne of the world, and that not only of outward power, but of a new worship, a new social civilization. Let criticism unriddle such a fact. A dead world quickened and born again by this "pious illusion!" We are grateful to a Baur, who shows us that Christianity came at a time when all the social religions and movements of the Roman empire opened the way. We accept it as added proof that its Author was "the fulness of times;" that in the phrase of Lacordaire, the Roman built his roads for the "triumphal march of the Consul Jesus." But it only proves the providence of God, not the human character of such a religion. It is a harder miracle we are forced to confess, than all the wonders at which men stumble in the pages of the Gospels. But it is not merely this primitive chapter we are to read. It is the unending miracle which reaches onward to ourselves. This kingdom of the Christ outlived the decay of the Roman world, and educated the new Europe. All the superstitions and the vices that at last gathered around the church cannot change the fact, that it

was the living power of thought and social growth. It is the very key of church history, without which we are blind to its meaning, that it reveals a progress not to be shut within a Greek or a Latin age, but to be read in the whole life of Christendom. Christianity itself, its own undying truth rises again like its Author out of the grave of the dead church, and begins afresh our modern history. It is here to-day, All the ideas, all the social powers that quicken the race, are the outcome of the Gospel; all the yearnings of our modern world for the unity of mankind are the fulfilling of the truth, which heathendom never knew, and even a Plato could not reach beyond the dream of an ideal commonwealth, but which Jesus Christ uttered when He declared all sons of one Father, and brethren of one redeemed household. Whence has the reformer, who in his mistaken enmity teaches a newer religion of humanity instead of the antiquated faith, learned a single idea not given in the Sermon on the Mount? What are the apostles of our latest socialism but poor copyists of the first Christian family? No step in human progress; no solid gain of freedom; no hope for the toiling millions, which is not within the divine plan of the Gospel. The Christianity of Christ is always the ideal of the

church. It has one end, the unity of mankind. And this kingdom of God, this history linked age after age with the welfare of the race, this communion which we see here to-day alive as at the beginning, this is the life of Jesus Christ; the volume wherein we read the mind of the Son of God.

With this outline—for who can give more than an outline?—of a character, a life so wonderful, we reach the end of our enquiry. What shall explain it? Reason as well as faith must give the answer. It is the history of One, who in a sense to be affirmed of no other, was the Son of God and Saviour of mankind. I am not here passing into any theological argument as to the divine nature of Christ. If I were, indeed, exploring that highest of problems, I should maintain that the doctrine of God revealed in His Son was, so far from a contradiction, the most reasonable of truths. But here I follow only the plain history of the New Testament. What is this character of Jesus Christ? It reveals our highest conception of God, the holiness, the love of His divine nature, yet one with a perfect humanity, If I see in Christ less than such a being, only the teacher of a human morality, or the example of a human goodness, there is nothing in his revelation to demand more than a

human origin. If I see in him the Son of God and the Saviour, that history from first to last, in His birth, His death, His personal career, and the growth of His kingdom, has in it the unity of a living whole. Nothing else gives meaning to the New Testament. It is "God reconciling the world to Himself;" it is this, or it is a riddle that defies solution.

Here, then, I apply the whole argument to the criticism of our day, which in denying this character, denies any divine revelation. I have stated at the outset its general position, but I am now to examine its theory of the life of Christ. I do not linger here on any earlier systems of naturalism. We need not dig up the remains of Voltaire or Rousseau. We are concerned with far abler champions. It is, indeed, the most significant of facts, that each theory in its turn has destroyed its predecessor; and it is yet more significant that in each case the theory has been broken, as it came into collision with the historic fact of the person of Christ. The coarser deism of former days flung away Christianity as imposture, but it was dismissed by the nobler rationalism as unworthy to explain so pure a character as that of the Gospels. Yet again in our own time the earlier rationalism has been renounced by the later school. It is but a little while

since the theory of Strauss was held the most brilliant solution of the riddle. In its view the Incarnation embodied the philosophic idea of the unity of the divine with the human, and Christ was the noblest myth of hero worship. But this notion could not stand the test of Gospel history. A philosophy, which taught that in the age of a Tacitus a religion could convert the world, yet its founder be no more than a creation of early Greek fable, was too mythical itself to be long upheld. Our latest neology, therefore, has left the field of speculation for that of critical study. It seeks to find such contradictions between the first three Gospels and the fourth, such marks of later origin in the epistles, that it can show Christianity to have been a legendary religion, which grew by degrees around the small historic kernel. I cannot here examine the whole ingenious fabric. I shall only test it by the same abiding fact, the life of Jesus Christ. And I shall choose the work, which at once represents the last position of criticism, and by its charm of style has taken many captive; I mean the romance of Renan, called the life of Jesus. His theory is this. Jesus, the Galilean youth, is born at a time when the Messianic ideas of his people are at the height; he begins as a

pure reformer his noble work, but by-and-by he is led to believe Himself the Messiah, is mingled with the movements of the Hebrew state, and dies. It is then, by the favoring tide of events, that a church arises; it comes in contact with Gentile culture, and so in the next age a theology, a worship of the divine man grows out of the simple Jewish germ. Christian history is thus a natural formation like all other history.

Let us, then, examine this theory in its turn, as it examines the Gospels. Science cares for no speculative notions of Christianity, we are told; we must go to the positive facts. Yes, I accept the challenge. We take this life as it is acknowledged by the critic himself; this life of a youth of Galilee, who in a corner of the Roman world spoke a wisdom above all sages, reached a purity that makes Him the ideal of human character, and in three years upbuilt a religion that has in it a light and life coextensive with the growth of the race. There is the fact. It is a reality as sure as the life of a Cæsar or a Socrates. It is somewhat nearer the ken of science than the skulls or flint hatchets, dug from the cavern, out of which our naturalists draw so readily their guesses about pre-historic man. We ask the positive philosopher to solve it by what he

calls natural laws. Does he answer that it cannot be admitted, because it is a miracle? But he is then assuming the very point to be proved. If he were reasoning on metaphysical grounds that a miracle is impossible, I should ask nothing better than to meet him there. I should say that his claim leads of necessity to the denial of a God of intelligence or love, and in that case we are no longer disputing of Christianity, but of the possibility of any religious belief. But it is the boast of our critic, in his own preface, that science has nothing to do with abstract reasoning for or against miracles. It simply tests them by fact. We ask him again what explains this fact? Either it is true that we have here what passes beyond the common phenomena of history, or we must hold that the fancy of a few half-lettered, contradictory writers in an age, after the creative life of the religion had faded, wrought out a character more perfect than any in human literature; and that, moreover, the whole fabric of a Christian civilization has been built on a legend. Is this reasonable? It is to destroy history. On whatever side we test it, it is untenable. It is useless to seek a later authorship for the sacred books. We may give up all a just criticism asks, and there still remains this essential witness to the life of Jesus. It is useless to rank

his religion in the family of past systems. All the faiths of mankind have had a local character save two, those of Mohammed and Buddha. But the truth of the Koran, the unity of God, is confessedly borrowed; it is a bastard Christianity. Buddhism, again, while it has a likeness in its revolt against the Hindu priesthood, is wholly unlike in that which is the essential truth of Christianity; it has no faith in God or immortality, and it has to-day no living growth. Both these religions stand among the foremost of all time, but they sink by the side of Jesus Christ.

And, therefore, we answer this last champion of naturalism by his own tests. We do not deny all the truth he has discovered by critical study; nay, we are grateful that he has brought forward the human side of Christian history. But we say that his theory is from first to last the assumption of the whole question he claims to solve. He has come to the life of Christ with the fixed denial of anything supernatural, and written it as he would the life of a Francis of Assisi. But unhappily this romance of Renan has another and a less pardonable feature. It is with words of deep reverence that he portrays the Teacher of Galilee as the wisest and purest of men, yet at the close, in order to explain away the

miracle of the raising of Lazarus, he does not fear to represent Jesus as lending Himself to a gross imposture. Amazing sophistry! To save the defects of this theory, the saintly Rabbi is changed into both enthusiast and deceiver! Nothing can show in so clear a way the dilemma to which any such theory is forced. Jesus Christ is either above man, or He is below the standard of the wisest and purest men. But I will not dwell on this. I am glad, with all my heart, to acknowledge a nobler spirit in the modern critic, than that of the coarse, venomous unbelief of former days.

Yet I need not reason further. I need only turn to the latest naturalism for its own confession. Nothing, since the famous saying of the half believing Rousseau, is more striking than the close of this romance of Renan. Listen to the last word of science: "This sublime man, who still presides each day over the history of the world, it is allowed to call divine, not in the sense that Jesus has absorbed all divinity, but that he has made for his race the greatest step toward it. Amidst the common level of mankind there rise pillars toward heaven, which witness a nobler destiny. Jesus is the highest of these pillars. In him is centered all of good and exalted in our nature. Whatever may

be the unlooked for phenomena of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young forever. All ages will say, that among the sons of men none has ever been greater than Jesus." I pause before such words. Admit this to be French rhetoric, yet the logic of truth compels the language. If after all the effort of subtle learning to rob this life of its divinity, it must allow that the man of Nazareth has reached a height none ever reached before him, or can ever surpass; that his religion has this undying future, we ask no more. I accept it as the unmasked homage of the mind and heart. I read it not in scorn, but gratitude. I count this life of Jesus one of the best books of Christian evidence the age has ever seen.

We may here then sum up the argument I have sought to draw from the twofold page of the New Testament and Christian history. The life of Jesus Christ is this reality. But it is not only to answer modern unbelief I here present it; it is to quicken our own living faith. Yes, this is the power of such a view of the Incarnation, that it gives us the real ground where faith and knowledge can meet, where our religion becomes to us a sure, a sacred truth in this day of opinions! I cannot more than glance at such a thought in closing, but I will briefly name a

few of its bearings. Here, I claim, is our noblest line of Christian evidence in the perplexed strife with science. There need be no strife, unless it be with the materialist, who knows no God save a blind natural force. No! we do not sever revelation from the domain of science; we must rather see in revelation that law of God in the moral history of man which is no contradiction of nature, but its fulfillment. The life of Christ reveals this truth. It gives their true meaning to the wonders of the New Testament. Is it a thing incredible to us, when we have seen the divine purpose of such a life, that He should heal the sick, or raise the dead? We have a far stronger argument than the older defenders of the school of Paley. We hold as truly the credibility of the Gospel narrative, but we do not make our Christianity a tradition of the past alone. The supernatural is not chiefly in the outward signs, but in the unending law by which this divine life works in the life of men. The special wonders were fitted to the early time, but the organic life is to us a grander fact. We know His spirit in the truth, that reveals the knowledge of God, the love that feeds the want of the human heart, and raises men from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. The Son of God hath this witness in Himself.

Here again we have our true ground in all the questions of criticism, which at this day assail the record. If we have known Him, who is the Word of life, we have learned how to read the written word with a knowledge of its essential meaning. The chief success of a destructive criticism is in the fact that so many have been led, by their theory of an infallible letter, to put their own interpretations instead of its living truth. We can leave to science what is within its sphere. The necessary faith is the same for the scholar and the simplest mind, which cannot master the difficulties of Scripture, but can know the argument beaming from the open Gospel. Revelation was not given to be a critical puzzle, but to teach the way of life. Such a view of the life of Christ thus gives us our real unity amidst the strifes of doctrinal opinion. Christian truth is one, because it rests not on a system of theology, but on Him, who is a living person. If we have learned the meaning of His incarnate work, all the connected truths of the New Testament are seen in their right relation to this one source. His divinity shines forth in His wisdom and His holiness; his death is the fulfilling of His whole redeeming work; the new birth of the spirit, and the gift of His grace, are known in the growth of our Christ-

like graces ; our union in His church is a brotherhood in the household of redeemed men, and the life of the world to come is the life begun here in duty to God and men. Doctrine and life are not twain, but one. If our theology forget this principle, it will change the religion of Christ into a system of notions. It is when the Incarnation has been made a metaphysical formula, the divinity torn from the humanity, the death from the whole life of sacrifice, the faith from a real holiness, the church fellowship from its social meaning, that men have lost their belief in the creeds. This is the deepest lesson to-day, that subtle definitions cannot restore the unity of the faith. I rejoice that this very strife through which we are now passing, shall lead us to the more real ground, where all true followers of the Master shall be one.

And thus, as my closing thought, we may look forward beyond the unbelief of the time to the result. We hear the voices of many, who tell us that we have outlived the Christianity of the past, and must end in the worship of an unknown God, a new religion of humanity. Is this the last triumph of science, to give us nothingness? No! We need not fear. The revelation of the Son of God will be its own evidence. The wants it meets are the

same. If the world has lost its faith in dead systems, it must seek a personal Father, a Providence in human history, a hope for mankind in this struggle with natural and moral evil, a kingdom of God, that can solve the dark riddles of poverty and wrong and sorrow, and make men one at last in a true brotherhood. "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?" is the question many minds ask in earnest thought. I thank God we may answer it with no theories of Christ or Christianity. We lead the doubter forth as we should the blind, who should tell us there was no light from heaven, and bid him feel the sun in its midday strength. We point him to this living kingdom of Christ, which cannot pass away, because it is built on the nature, and is large as the destiny of mankind. This is the evidence of His religion. This is the book of the life of Christ. It begins with the Gospel of His birth. It is written in the yet unfinished acts of all apostles, from a Paul to an Augustine and a Luther, who have taught his truth; from the battlefields of the church to the least servant of the Master who has borne His cross; from the library of the scholar, the palace, the prison, the hospital, the highways and the byways; wherever this divine man has spoken to men of His Father and their Father;

wherever He has healed the penitent, and led the lost back to the way of life ; wherever He has lifted the craftsman above his toil ; has broken the chain of the slave ; has made rich and poor partakers of one grace, and blessed the grave with this word of comfort, " I am the Resurrection." All are His witnesses, and from all rises the same confession, that was uttered in the earliest Christian time : " I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth ; and in Jesus Christ, His Son our Lord, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried ; the third day He rose from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty. And I believe in the Holy Ghost ; the holy catholic church, the communion of saints ; the forgiveness of sins ; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. AMEN."

WHO WAS JESUS CHRIST ?

BY REV. CHAUNCEY GILES.

TEXT :—“ BEHOLD A VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND SHALL BRING FORTH A SON, AND THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME EMMANUEL, WHICH BEING INTERPRETED IS GOD WITH US.”—MATTH. I., 23D.

The Lord has always been in the effort to reveal Himself to man. He created man to be the recipient of His life, and the object of His love. He made man in His own image, after His own likeness, that he might be capable of becoming the embodiment of the Divine love and wisdom in ever-increasing fulness. It is the essential nature of unselfish love to give itself to others. Infinite love must be an infinite desire to make others the sharers of its blessedness, and infinite wisdom must provide the best possible means of accomplishing the purposes of infinite love. This is the final end of the creation.

The material universe must, therefore, be a revelation of God from God ; it must be the form of His

thought, the embodiment of His love, and point in every substance and quality to human good. Before man lost his finer consciousness by sin, he could see the love and wisdom of the Lord in the creation as in an open book; he could give the name, that is, he could discern the divine meaning in every natural object presented to his senses. Some gifted souls have retained this consciousness in an imperfect degree; but it is rather a feeling of the beauty and significance of nature than a distinct thought. They are conscious that star and mountain and ocean and flower must have a meaning, though they do not know what it is. A few may be able to look "through nature up to nature's God," but their sight is so dim, and their perception so feeble and vague, that they see only the faint image of His glory, and hear only the echo of His voice. They see Him, if at all, "as in a glass darkly." His image is confused with the forms of nature. But to most men, even the most gifted in science, nature has not been transparent; they could not look through it to anything beyond. Their thought and affections rested in it, and they mistook the creation for the Creator.

When man had fallen so low that there was a breach between his highest faculties and the Lord;

when sin had caused a deadly stupor in his heavenly affections, and had perverted all the forms of his understanding so that he saw everything distorted, and nothing clearly, the Lord came to him in the form of an angel, and revealed Himself in a written Word, in Moses, in the prophets and the Psalms. He wrought the most stupendous miracles; gave His law in the most impressive manner amid the thunders of Sinai; sent judgments for sin, and blessings for obedience; He instructed and warned by the mouth of His prophets. But the breach between man and the Lord continued to grow wider. Man continued to gravitate toward outward and sensuous things. The Lord was losing His hold upon his affections. Man lost his power of conceiving of a spiritual world, and of a spiritual state of existence. A Being of infinite love and wisdom, who appealed only to motives of fear and hope, who revealed Himself only to the understanding and the reason, was too remote from him to maintain any controlling power over him. He had come into a state in which he must have a God whom he could see and hear and touch, a God in the human form, with a distinct personality, a God who could be with him in the state to which he had fallen.

Infinite love could not rest until it had met these

demands of man's exigency. The Lord had done all He could for man in every stage of his descent. He challenges him to mention anything He could have done which He had not done for His people. He could not fail them now. He had, indeed, tried to comfort and cheer them with the promise that He would come in the fulness of time, discomfit their enemies, and save them.

In our text we have the announcement of His coming, and the method and the purpose of it. He came to be Emmanuel; God with us. Emmanuel expresses His character and relations to men; Jesus the work He came to do, and Christ the anointing of divine power with which He was endowed for the performance of His work. Jesus Christ, therefore, was God with men. God in a human form; God in a human nature and personality; God in the material world; God in a material body. Jesus Christ was the Alpha become the Omega; the First become the Last. This is the answer which the Lord himself gives in the Sacred Scriptures to the question, Who was Jesus Christ? But it is an answer which has been much misunderstood, both by those who accept it, and by those who reject it.

A careful examination of the Gospels will show that Jesus Christ, when speaking of Himself, rarely,

if ever, identifies Himself with the Father. On the contrary, He maintains a clear and constant distinction between Himself and the Father, even while claiming divine attributes. Even when He declares that He and the Father are one, He does not say they are the same. He shows that they were not identical. This distinction which He scrupulously maintains between Himself and the Father has led to two directly opposite results, one, that He was not God, but only a more largely endowed man; the other, that He was God, but a distinct person from Jehovah. Both of these views are inconsistent with reason, and irreconcilable with the whole of Scripture. The New Church does not, therefore, hold to either of them. Its doctrines teach that Jesus Christ, *while He dwelt among men*, was not Jehovah, nor was He a man like other men. He was the human nature which Jehovah, the Divine, as it is in itself, whose name is I Am, and of whom nothing can be known or predicated except existence, assumed for the purpose of revealing Himself to man in His proper form and character, and coming to him in a way to gain recognition, and save him. He was God manifest in the flesh. He differed from man in having a Divine Father; He differed from Jehovah in having a human soul. He was not a

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Divine Being distinct from the Father. One Divine Being cannot beget another Divine Being. Man partakes of the nature of the father and mother. Jesus Christ had a Divine Father and a human mother. When we use the words Jesus Christ we must limit the meaning to the human nature derived from Mary, but subject to the divine nature within. It was the human nature that was born. A divine nature could not be born, but it could be clothed with a human nature, and by means of it manifest itself in human forms and conditions, and in this way become known to men. Jehovah was in Jesus Christ as a divine soul, as man's soul is in his body. Thus Jehovah and Jesus were not two persons, but one person, as the human soul and material body are not two men, but one man. The body is not the soul; neither is the soul the body. Taken together they make one person, one man. We must conceive of Jehovah as being within Jesus, and not as standing by His side, nor as dwelling in some place where Jesus is not.

This is the constant representation which Jesus gives of His relation to Jehovah in the Gospels. "The Father is in Me;" "I came out from God," not from some place where He is to some world where He is not; "I came out from Him," as the

plant comes out from the seed, as speech comes from thought, and act from life; "Neither came I of myself; He sent me," yet "He dwelleth in Me." We must keep the sending and the coming and the doing in connection with the Father; "He doeth the works." If we keep in mind that the Father was in the Son as the soul is in the body, it will help us to understand how Jehovah and Jesus were one Divine Person, as soul and body make one human person. It will help us still further, if we keep in mind that it is the inmost of every human being which constitutes his personality. It is the soul, not the body, which determines the rank of every human being. The soul of Jesus Christ was Jehovah; viewed in His whole nature He was therefore divine.

We are also to take into consideration the fact that a human nature is something more than a physical nature. Animals have a physical nature, but they do not possess a human nature. A human nature is constituted of will and understanding; it can reason and remember, and conceive of qualities separate from their subjects, and it is capable of indefinite progress. Jehovah took upon Himself a complete human nature, endowed with all human qualities, and subject to all human limitations. It

could increase in knowledge; it could be tempted; it could love and suffer, enjoy and die.

This fact has given rise to many doubts about the divine character of the Son. But if He had not been subject to all these limitations, His nature would not have been human, and the end of the Incarnation would have been defeated. Indeed, there would have been no Incarnation.

There is one other fact to be taken into consideration which has an important bearing upon the subject. The human nature held within it the infinite forces of the divine love and wisdom, and it was constantly undergoing a change from the influence of their presence and power. This change is called glorification. It consisted in putting off the finite and imperfect human which was common to men, and replacing it with a divine humanity, capable of acting with the divine as it is in itself. This change in the human nature was the return to the Father. The human consciousness became perfectly united with the divine consciousness. Before this union took place the human could think of the divine as distinct from itself, as a man can think of his body as distinct from himself. The human could pray to the divine; could seem to be deserted by it. But when the glorification was completed, the two na-

tures became one. There was only one consciousness, one will. The Father dwelt in the Son, and the Son in the Father. Those who saw Jesus saw the Father. Now Jehovah and Jesus are one divine person, and have one name, and that is Lord. The prophecy is fulfilled, "There is one Lord, and one name" "In Jesus Christ dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

This grand and central truth will appear still more clearly as we proceed to inquire into the reasons for the assumption of a human nature, and see how Jesus worked and lived while He dwelt among men. Did He live and work like a God, or like an imperfect and sinful man? We have already touched upon the first part of the question, but its importance demands further exposition and illustration.

For what purpose did Jehovah take upon himself a human nature? The word Emmanuel is the briefest answer. He did it that He might be God with men, and thus become Jesus their Saviour. He took upon Himself man's nature that He might bridge the gulf which sin had made between Him and man, and come to man, and help man to come to Him. The human became a mediator between the divine and man. It made an atonement between them. Jehovah came into such relations to man

that He could bear His sins. He could put, as it were, His divine shoulder to them, and by His omnipotent power roll their burden off from man's soul. He came into such contact with man's nature that He could heal His spiritual diseases, and pour a new current of life into His dying soul. His work embraces the forgiveness of sin, the regeneration of man's spiritual nature, and the restoration to the soul of the divine image and likeness lost by the fall. To accomplish this work it was necessary that He should be God with man. No mere man could do it; no angel could do it. It was a work which He alone who is life, could perform.

The grounds of this necessity embrace some of the profoundest questions which have ever exercised the powers of the human mind. Yet when divested of metaphysical subtleties, and viewed in the light of all the divine methods, they are plain and simple and easy of comprehension. They are illustrated and confirmed by all human observation and experience.

Every one knows that power cannot be applied to effect any given purpose until it is connected with the means necessary to accomplish it, in such a manner that it can be brought to bear upon them. The means by which the connection is ef-

fects will depend upon the nature of the power, and the effect to be produced. Here is a falling stream, rushing along over its rocky bed, playing idly with pebbles, swinging in lovely curves round rock and root, leaping with joy into quiet pools, smoothing its surface into shining mirrors, and holding in its peaceful bosom images of grass and blossoms, the trees which fringe its borders, and the mountains whose mighty shoulders buttress the skies, and the blue vault of heaven, with its suns and constellations. This stream holds in its hands an immense force. We desire to bring that force into our service, to make it grind our wheat, spin our cotton and wool, weave our cloth, drive our planes and saws, and swing our hammers, and in manifold ways do our work. But to do this we must bring it into connection with the work to be done. We must put suitable tools into its hands. The stream must be with them in such a manner that its force can be brought to bear upon them. When this is done it will give us all the power it possesses.

The same water lies in a well, or sleeps in a fountain, or rolls in the waves of the ocean. To bring that into our service we must change its form, and prepare a place for it suitable to its nature. Then

it will apply its mighty force to our burdens; it will give swiftness to our feet, bring the ends of the earth together, and make neighbors of the most remote peoples. Steam is God's power brought into human use. The boiler and piston and cylinder are to this power as the human nature which Jehovah assumed is to His divine power of overcoming man's enemies, of healing his diseases, and regenerating his soul.

These are examples of universal law, and we need not go out of the circle of the most limited experience to find instances of it. Indeed, every act we do in attaining the ends we seek illustrates it. Fire will boil our pot, and bake our bread, and roast our meat, but we must bring them together in an orderly way, according to their nature. The fire must be with the substances it is to act upon, and its power must be accurately adjusted to their nature. If we throw our meat into the fire it will be consumed. So "God out of Christ is a consuming fire." "No man can see His face and live." The ardors of His love, and the glory of His wisdom are so intense in their activities, that man could no more subsist in their immediate presence than a straw could preserve its structure in the sun.

Now let us apply the principles embodied in these

illustrations to the relations of the Lord to man. Man is the object to which the divine power is to be applied; he is the organic form to be created and filled with life. It is the Lord's purpose to mould him into His own image; to impress His own beauty upon him; to fill him with His own love; to enlighten him with His own wisdom, and to bless him with His own joy. All the power to accomplish this final end of infinite love is the Lord's power. The supreme question must, therefore, be how to apply the power to man to accomplish the result. This is the question which absorbs the whole thought of the Lord. The material universe in every form and substance and motion is the method and provision of infinite wisdom to adjust infinite power to accomplish this purpose. It is the Lord's method of coming to man from one direction, that He may be with him.

Think for a moment how nice and exquisite must be the adjustment of one substance to another, which form the steps of His descent to man's physical nature. How perfectly the light is adapted to the eye, so that the sun can come to man and dwell with him, be a light on his path, paint his pictures, reveal the beauty and grandeur of the earth, and the glory of the heavens. With equal precision heat,

another substance of the sun, is adjusted to the structure of all material forms. The sun comes to the earth to be with every animal and plant, and grain of sand, to warm and vivify, and make the earth a possible and pleasant home for man, and to give action to all His own physical forms. With what miraculous precision these solar forces are adjusted to the nature of every organic form and inorganic substance. If their intensity were much increased, the earth would become a desert of burning sand. If they were much diminished, it would be desolate with polar snows. All these adjustments, by which the intensest heat and the finest auras are connected with the coarsest mineral, and rise through the material body to man's spiritual nature, are steps by which the Lord comes to man, and dwells with him.

Now let us apply these purposes and universal methods of divine operation to the Lord's relations to man as a spiritual being. At the time of the advent, man had become separated from the Lord in the higher planes of His nature, by falsity and sin. He was like a branch broken from a vine, and connected with it only by the bark. As he is so often described in the Word, man was spiritually blind and deaf. He could not see truth in its spiritual

form; he could not hear the voice of the Lord as He spoke by the mouth of prophet and psalmist. The Lord had come to man in the form of an angel. He had sent Moses and David and Elias, but they had been rejected. What then could He do? If He remained aloof, man would inevitably perish. He could not send His message by another, for neither angel nor man could deliver it. He could not come in His own unclothed divinity, for that would consume man. He could only come by assuming a nature similar to man's nature. If a blind and deaf man has wandered from the path, and is groping his way toward a precipice, we cannot warn him of his danger by calling to him; our voice cannot reach him. We cannot point out the destruction before him, for he cannot see it. We cannot reach him with the eye. It would be useless to send a blind man after him. There is only one resource left. We must go to him physically. Our love and wisdom must become incarnated; we must have a material hand to grasp his hand. In this way only can we be with him, and bring our power to bear upon him for his salvation.

This was man's relation to the Lord. The Lord could not reach him by angels; He could not reach him by man; he could not reach him in His own

unclothed divinity. He must clothe His divine with a human nature; He must invest His divine arm with an arm of flesh; He must bring His truth down to man's capacity of reception; he must come to his senses. That was the ground man occupied, and it was the only ground on which the Lord could meet him, and be with him.

By coming to man on the physical plane of his existence, and dwelling with him, the Lord gained recognition. The divine controlled the human, and shone through it with sufficient clearness and power to awaken attention, and suggest that He was more than a man. It is true this recognition of the divine in the guise of the human was obscure at first. He was liable to be mistaken by men for a man like themselves, and nothing more; or if they regarded Him as a Divine Being, they were in danger of concluding that a Divine Being was nothing more than what they saw Him to be. These mistakes were made, and are made to this day. But this danger was unavoidable. There was no other way of getting hold of man. The Lord must come into the world as all men come. He must stand with man shoulder to shoulder; He must labor with him, and eat with him; He must rejoice and weep with him, live with him, and die with Him, as one man with another.

He did this; and by doing it an immense step was gained. It is difficult for us to conceive, unless we are familiar with the doctrines of modern scientists and the apostles of science, how dim and erroneous were the conceptions of God at the time of His advent. To come to man, therefore, and reveal Himself as a personal being in the human form, and in this way to gain a lodgment in history and literature, was to bridge the gulf between God and man, and provide a medium for the communication of His life to us. He steps out from the blinding effulgence of His glory, draws the veil of flesh over His face, upon which unveiled no man can look and live, and comes as a man among men. From an infinite somewhat He becomes a Someone of whom men can think. He is not merely abstract love, wisdom, power. He is a personal being in the human form, who loves, is wise, and whose heart overflows with human sympathy.

This coming in the flesh, however, was only a means to a higher purpose, and that was that He might come to man's spiritual nature to illuminate his understanding, and revivify his spiritual affections. He came in the only way of approach left open to Him, and in the only form in which He could be recognized by man, and when He had

gained recognition in the lowest form, He began to ascend to a higher plane of man's mind, and to manifest the divine attributes of His own nature. He showed men how a being of infinite love and wisdom lives when environed with human conditions. God comes to us, takes upon Himself our nature, invests Himself with human infirmities, and demonstrates by manifold examples how the Highest acts in the lowest plane of life.

This gives to His example a significance and power immeasurably greater than it would have possessed if Jesus Christ had been only a more highly endowed man like ourselves. It carries an infinite force with it. It tends to reverse, not only all our ideas of the divine character, but gives us a new standard of a noble human life. He shows us how God lives when He is in the same plane of life as men are. How humble He was! He was born in a manger; He was obedient to His earthly parents; He associated with publicans and sinners; He lived a most simple and unobtrusive life; He went about doing good, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, teaching the ignorant, and in manifold ways ministering to human necessities; He was gentle, pure, tender, sympathizing and helpful to all who would receive help from Him. When John

sent his disciples to learn whether Jesus was the Messiah or not, He sent back these remarkable evidences of His divinity: "In that same hour He cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many blind He gave sight. Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see; the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed; the deaf hear; the dead are raised; to the poor the Gospel is preached." This is the way the Lord works when He becomes God with men.

Think what He who stilled the tempest, who multiplied the five loaves and two fishes to food sufficient for hungry thousands, who healed the sick, and raised the dead, and who read the hearts of all men like an open book, think what an empire He could have established. He could have subdued all nations to His sway. By the fiat of His will He could have raised palaces and temples surpassing in beauty, glory and magnificence all the possibilities of human conception. He could have lived in a luxury and grandeur compared with which all the splendor of imperial courts would be low and rude. That was the Jewish conception of God; that was what they expected the Messiah to be. And

because He did not answer to their expectations they crucified Him. That is man's idea of honor, power and glory. But it is not the divine idea. God with men takes upon Himself the form of a servant; He works in the lowest conditions; He was poorer than the foxes. They have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man had not where to lay His head. By His example He gave to man a true picture of a divine life in the most humble conditions.

But the Lord desired to be with men in the higher planes of life, in those faculties which are distinctly human. He came a light into the world to lead men back to heaven; He came to be with man in his reason and understanding. Accordingly we find Him constantly engaged in teaching; and He did this in an infinitely wise way. He brought truth down to man's capacity; He taught him in parables; he illustrated the highest spiritual truths by the most familiar events; he met man on the common ground of his thinking, and brought the divine mind into contact with the human mind in its lowest state. By so doing He kindled a spiritual light in the understanding.

This simplicity and adaptation of divine truth to the mental condition of men is one of the most

beautiful and touching excellencies of His ministry, and one of the strongest evidences of His divine character. By coming to men where they were mentally, entering into their thought, dwelling with them in their ignorance and spiritual darkness, He awakened sympathy, excited attention, and under the guise of natural truths and familiar sayings, He lodged spiritual and divine truths in their minds.

We can easily conceive that He might have spoken in a manner that would have excited the admiration of the world. Yet He sung no song to charm the ear of men with its melody. He could have surpassed in eloquence all the orators of Greece and Rome, but He delivered no oration to arouse the passions, and captivate by its power. He talked of lilies and cornfields; of fishing and household service. He came to men on the level of their thought, for the purpose of raising them above that level. He knew the secrets of nature, and yet He did not teach science; He established no school of philosophy; He did not even draw up a system of doctrine. To do any of these things would have been to work in a region above human thought as it then existed. He would not have been "with men." He did not work like an ambitious man; He worked like a God, and, therefore, He adapted His teaching to meet man's universal wants.

But men may be taught and raised into the heaven of intellectual light, and still not be benefited by the truth. Jehovah assumed a human nature that He might be God with men in their hearts. We are never thoroughly and securely with another until heart meets heart. God cannot be with men, with the essential human principle in man, until He gains entrance into their affections. His love must become our love, and our love must become His love. There must be a reciprocal union of affection. When this takes place, and only then, is the Lord really with man.

To awaken this love in our hearts it was necessary that His love should take on a form that would touch us and awaken sympathy. We cannot love an abstraction; our affections are not called into play by an Almighty force; our hearts do not grow warm at the thought of a universal but invisible presence. We can form no conception of infinite love until it takes on a human nature.

This is what the Lord did in the incarnation. Jesus Christ was the form of that love brought down even to the senses. He sympathized with suffering in every form, and was always active in relieving it; He was patient and tender with the erring; His soul was touched with man's infirmi-

ties, and pierced with his sorrows; He wept at the grave of Lazarus; His heart yearned with the tenderest pity over Jerusalem; He prayed for those who crucified Him. Every act of His life was a form of His love. By these deeds of love the divine heart was brought into contact with the human heart, and the river of life which issues from the divine love, and makes everything live whithersoever it cometh, began to flow into the dead souls of men.

The human nature called Jesus Christ was the connecting link between Jehovah, the infinite I Am, and man as he lay in his fallen state, poor, blind, deaf and dead in sin. By means of it the Lord approached man, came into his conditions, took upon Himself man's infirmities, bore His burdens, was tried with His temptations. He was with him as a man; He was with him as a God, and power was constantly going out from Him to heal his spiritual diseases, to dispel his darkness, to give liberty to his imprisoned faculties, to revivify his spiritual affections. He came as a God to dwell with us, that He might raise us up to dwell with Him.

From whatever point of view we regard the question, we are logically led to the conclusion, that Jesus Christ, strictly discriminated from the Divine before

the Incarnation, was the human nature which Jehovah assumed, that by means of it He might bridge the gulf between Himself and man in his fallen state; come to him in a form adapted to his weak and perverted condition; save him from his sins, and raise him up to everlasting life. But regarded in the whole range of His being, from its centre to its circumference, He was Jehovah Himself clothed with a moral and intellectual human nature, which was also invested with a material body. The consenting voice of the whole of Scripture, when understood, avers this truth; the nature of infinite love and wisdom leads inevitably to this conclusion; man's lost condition, and the means necessary to his salvation, demand it. It reconciles the Unity of God with the Trinity in His nature, and solves the most difficult problem in religious truth. Jesus Christ was Emmanuel, God with us. In His divine person, therefore, we have the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We have one Lord in a form adapted to every plane and state of human consciousness, who is the First and the Last, the only source of life, the only Saviour, and the only proper object of worship.

THE MAGNETISM OF THE CROSS.

BY EBENEZER P. ROGERS, D. D.

THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN, 12TH CHAP., 32 V.—“AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME.”

It is very significantly added by the Evangelist, in the verse following, “This he said, signifying what death he should die.” It was the death of the Cross, the most ignominious and painful of all forms of public execution. It involved the deepest dishonor, as well as the most fearful suffering. It was inflicted only on the meanest, as well as the worst criminals.

It was to this form of death, this being “lifted up” on the cross, that Jesus alludes, and claims that thus put to death, he will exert the widest and most powerful influence on men.

The mode of crucifixion was to extend the victim upon the timbers, as they were laid upon the ground, nailing the feet to the upright, and the

hands to the transverse beam. The cross was then raised from the earth and planted firmly in an excavation prepared for it, while the unhappy victim thus lifted up, was left to perish by the steady wearing pressure of bodily torture. This was the dreadful fate in reserve for Jesus. The people had attempted to stone him to death, but he was not to die in that way. He was to be lifted up; lifted up, as a spectacle to heaven and earth; lifted up in scorn of his lofty pretensions; in derision and rejection of his claims; in hatred and revenge by his enemies, and thus, was his brief earthly life to close. He knew it. All through his life he saw the cross before him. He knew perfectly well, what his fate was to be. He accepted the situation. Keenly sensitive in body and soul as he was, both to physical, and mental anguish, to pain, and to shame, and to sorrow, he looked calmly and bravely at the terrible scene and never flinched. It was to be to him, not an hour of suffering only, but an hour of triumph; not a scene of shame alone, but a scene of glory too. "Yes," said he, "I am going to the cross. I am to die a cursed death. I am to be lifted, up as a malefactor, to a cruel and a disgraceful end. But my foes will all be disappointed. They may inflict on me a death of agony and

shame. They may hope thus to destroy my influence, and leave my memory to infamy. They may hope thus to brand me as an impostor, and make my teaching of no effect in the world. They will be baffled. My death will only be the beginning of my triumph. From the very hour of my crucifixion, the power of my gospel will be manifested, and my kingdom will begin its reign. Yes! lift me up on the bitter, and cursed tree. You raise me to a conqueror's throne. Lift me up, in the weakness, and the ignominy of a felon, and a slave. It will be a glorious and triumphant exaltation. For I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me!"

There have been many brave words spoken by dying men, but none like these. When Sir John Oldcastle was condemned to die for his adherence to the truth by an English court, he said to his judges, "Ye judge the body, which is but a wretched thing, but I am certain ye can do no harm to my soul. He who created that, will of his own mercy and promise save it. As to the articles of my faith, I will stand to them, even to the very death, by the grace of my Eternal God."

When Bishops Latimer and Ridley were burned together at the stake, it was a brave word which one spoke to the other.

“Brother, we shall this day light such a flame in England, that all the floods of heaven shall not be able to put it out.” That was a true prophecy.

But the words of Jesus, when he spoke of the death which he was about to die, were grander than these. It was not a single country, but the whole world that was to be moved by that death. It was not merely one age, but all the coming ages down to the end of time, that were to bear their united, and overwhelming testimony to the wonderful, and irresistible magnetism of the cross.

How then has this prophecy been fulfilled?

We reply, It has been fulfilled in the history of Christianity.

What are the simple facts of that history?

Eighteen hundred years ago, Jesus Christ was born, lived, taught, promulgated a system of truth and morals, suffered and died. He was born and lived among humble surroundings, gathered round him but few followers; made little impression upon his own age, and died a helpless victim in the hands of his foes.

Judging after the manner of men and outside of the records of history, we should say, that in the end of the story, Jesus Christ will be forgotten. For a little while, his few friends may recall the

memories of his life, and mourn over his tragical death, but that will be all. After the lapse of a generation his very name will be forgotten, and scarcely a vestige of his system will remain upon the earth.

Is this the fact? Fifty-five generations have passed away, and there is no name which exerts such an influence in the world to-day, as the name of Him, who was lifted up on the cross. It is associated with the most advanced civilization; with the best and most enduring literature; with the noblest forms of art; with the broadest systems of education; with the most gigantic enterprises of commerce; with the purest, and most extended institutions of philanthropy; with the most refined and healthful social progress; and in fine, with every element of dignity, prosperity and power, among the nations of the earth.

The name Christian, which was at first given to a few humble individuals in an Oriental city, as a term of reproach, is now blazoned on the banners of the greatest kingdoms of the earth, and borne with pride by the peoples who rule the world. The cross, once an emblem of shame and reproach, and guilt, is now a symbol of what is pure and honorable, and sacred, among the most advanced, and powerful

nations of the earth. It gleams from the spires and towers of innumerable temples of Christian worship. It is borne on the diadems of the most illustrious kings. Beauty wears it as an ornament. Devotion bows before it, on the altar. It has given shape, and grandeur to the proudest specimens of modern architecture. It has inspired the noblest creations of the chisel and the pencil. It has kindled in human hearts, the most heroic sentiments. It has led unnumbered hosts to battle, and to victory. It has inspired more martyrs, than Science, or Art, or Discovery, or Commerce, or any great interest of mankind. It has cheered the souls of the dying, and been carved by loving fingers, over the tombs of the dead. It is to-day the symbol of the most advanced forms of civilization, the most liberal systems of government, the most progressive theories of human development, the purest social state, and the most practical and successful endeavors for the amelioration of human suffering, and the extension of human happiness. A man must be blind, and deaf, and idiotic, who can look over the world and deny that this is the history, and this the present position of Christianity.

It is not then too much to say, that the words of Jesus Christ, uttered in view of his death upon the

cross, "and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me," have really been fulfilled in the history of Christianity. The prophecy was that the doctrine of the cross, or in other words, the great doctrine of the Atonement, should be the greatest moral power in the universe. The prediction was that this suffering dying Saviour should be the centre of attraction to the world, and that an influence should emanate from his cross, which should eventually bring the whole world under its sway. It was, as if he had said, "You may hang me on a cross; you may lift me up between heaven and earth, but in so doing, you will make me the grand centre of universal and permanent attraction among men. I shall not die. My name will never be forgotten. No name will be so well known by all mankind. No name will excite so much interest, provoke so much discussion, arouse so much opposition, awaken so much enthusiasm, kindle so much devotion, and be so constantly on the lips of men. No story will be so deeply incorporated into the literature of all ages, will be told in so many of the languages of the earth, will be the theme of so much comment, will excite so much emotion, and be so carefully handed down from generation to generation."

Is not all this true? What man of ordinary in-

telligence will deny it? There is a day in the Christian calendar known emphatically as "The Lord's Day." On that day, in every quarter of the globe, the name of Jesus, the crucified one, is on millions of tongues. Mothers speak it to their children; preachers discourse upon it to crowds of hearers; in every known and read language, it is impressed upon the printed page: it is chanted in holy psalms, sung in glorious anthems; breathed in fervent prayers, adored with the most impassioned fervor of the soul. On the Lord's day, everywhere, amid the Arctic frosts, or the Equatorial heats, among the sands of the deserts, and the isles of the sea, this name of Christ, this story of the cross, is spoken, and the sun, in his radiant course around the world, witnessess the universal homage paid to Him, who was lifted up on the tree, and who then predicted that his cross would be the grand magnetic centre of the creation of God.

But we do not look merely to the external history of Christianity, and its progress through the ages, for the proof of the fulfillment of the significant prophecy of the text. There is a history of the world which is not recorded in massive volumes, or gathered into great libraries, or connected with the movements of nations, and the growth of insti-

tutions. A very important part of it is found in the records of individuals, in the varied but truthful annals of human experience.

Christ, and his cross have made their deepest marks, on individual hearts, and have had much to do in shaping human experience. Men have been drawn to Christ in the great crises of their lives; in the deep waters through which they were called to pass; when they could find help from no other source; comfort from no other name. When conscience has been aroused in the human breast, and a sense of guilt, and a fear of retribution, have pressed heavily on the soul; when men have felt that they needed deliverance from sin and acceptance with God, then this attractive power of the crucified Christ has been profoundly felt. And the universality of this attraction, of which Jesus speaks in the text, is illustrated by the fact, that men of all nations, of all classes, of all shades of moral character, and all peculiarities of spiritual experience have gone to Him and his cross, for the supply which they needed in their urgent necessity, their fearful danger, their felt sin, and the anguish of their convicted souls. Everywhere, in all ages, the cross has appealed to that sense of need, which conviction of sin has always awakened in the mind.

Here, its power has been marvelously illustrated. It has revealed a way of justification for the condemned, of pardon for the guilty, and of salvation for the lost, through the atoning death and merits of a representative Saviour, who "died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." It has revealed the great truth to the faith of millions, that, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but might have everlasting life." It has solved the great problem, "How shall man be just with God?" by revealing the method, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," for "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

This prophecy of the text was illustrated even while Jesus was actually hanging on the cross. By his side there hung a man who was a representative man, not perhaps in all the outward peculiarities, and details of his character and history, but in those soul needs which are radical and vital with us all, and which sooner or later assert themselves with tremendous power. He was meeting the stern realities of the dying hour, without preparation, and without hope. He was a guilty man, on the verge

of the eternal world. He stood where all men must stand. The great need of his soul was the need of all, pardon, hope, peace. Upon his eye fast closing on earthly scenes, dawned a vision of the patient, heroic sufferer by his side, whose words it may be, he had heard in days gone by, and his faith then and there grasped the truth that He was a Saviour, who was "mighty to save." And with his last breath he prayed to him with a brief petition, but so comprehensive, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest in thy kingdom." How was it, that this guilty, dying man felt such a drawing to Jesus, in that awful hour? How was it, that in that dying sufferer by his side, he recognized one who could help him in his extremity? Ah! this was already the fulfillment of the prophecy of my text, "and I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." This sinful, dying man felt the strange power of the magnetism of Christ. He felt the pressure of the burden of sin. He felt his lost and helpless condition, and cast himself on Jesus, yielding all his being up to his attraction, and clinging as with the gripe of death, to him alone for salvation. And he found all that he needed, in Christ. Even at the moment when Death's icy hand was to be laid on his heart, to stop the tumultuous flow of its blood, and the

stormy current of its passion, turning to Jesus in humble, penitent pleading, he found the peace which he craved in those blessed words, "To-day, shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

How many times has this history been repeated, in the eighteen hundred years since Jesus, being lifted up, began to draw all men unto him! What multitudes of men, weary, heavy laden with sin and with sorrow, have gone to him for rest. How many like the jailer at Philippi, have asked, "What must I do to be saved?" and found a strange, divine significance in the simple answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Men of the city, and men of the forest; men coming like Nicodemus, in the shadow of the night, or crying like Bartimens, in the glare of the noon-day, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me," have alike been drawn to Him, who was lifted up, and found in him just the Saviour whom they needed. The name of this crucified One has been the name above every other name to bring peace and comfort to the soul, when wearied with the burden of sin, it sought for rest.

Yes! Jesus has drawn sinful men to him, through all these years, with a mighty attraction. It is wonderful what a power there has been in the simple

story of the cross, to win men from all their impenitence, and carelessness, and folly, and idolatries, and give them peace, and comfort, and purity, and hope. No story of any other death has had such power. No name has ever so won its way into the deepest recesses of human hearts. The doctrine of the Atonement as "a satisfaction to the ethical nature of God," as a vicarious offering to law and justice, has met the wants of the convicted soul as no other doctrine ever has; and while no doctrine has been so criticised, so opposed, so maligned, and so denied, still the name of Jesus, and the story of the cross, have been a great power in the earth for all these centuries. That wondrous message spoken so long ago by Him who was lifted up, is still echoing through the world, and thousands of heavy hearts grow lighter at the sound, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

This great prophecy of the text has been illustrated, not only in the history of sin, but in that of sorrow. Jesus, and his cross, have had a divine power to comfort the mourner.

Since the world was made, men have been brothers in suffering.

"The fool hath said, there is no God,
But none, there is no sorrow."

To ameliorate human suffering, and assuage human grief, has been a great study of wise men and philanthropists ever since sorrow followed in the train of sin. Philosophers and moralists, and orators and poets, and teachers of every variety, in all ages, have tried to discover some adequate solace for human woe. What volumes have been written, what orations have been pronounced, what counsels have been published on this theme, so old and hackneyed, yet so constant, and imperative.

And how little have all these done, to lighten the burdens which rest on sorrowful souls. All that they could do was to inculcate the cold lessons of stoicism, or urge men to a blind and reluctant submission to the decrees of an inevitable, and irresistible fate. "Why do you weep since tears are unavailing?" said one to Solon, as he mourned at the bier of his child. "It is for that very reason that I weep," was the heart-broken father's reply.

How different are the ministrations of Christ, to mourners. He too says to the widow, "Weep not," but not in the cold words of unfeeling stoicism. He says to the bereaved father, at the grave of his son, to the mother, as with a heart throbbing with anguish she bends over her dying babe, "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me,

though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." He says, " In my Father's house are many mansions," and " God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Thus his ministrations are not those of a philosopher or a mere teacher, but of a living, and sympathizing friend and helper, bringing to the afflicted, revelations which are full of practical power to help and comfort.

How many has this lifted One drawn to himself by the power of his sympathy? " For since he himself hath also suffered being tempted, (or tried), he is able to succor them that are tempted." Could we invade the sacred privacy of the sad home ; could we draw aside the veil which hangs over many a sorrowful heart, we could show you how Christ, the suffering Saviour, has drawn to him multitudes of sorrowful souls, by a magnetism all his own. There are hosts of sufferers to-day, of all ranks, and peculiarities of trial, who are deriving comfort, and strength, and power of heroic endurance, from their simple faith in a crucified Christ. And there are also many for whom this world has done its best, who are restless, and sad, and comfortless, only because they have not yielded themselves to the attraction of the cross, and gone to Jesus for rest.

If the Christian religion had furnished no other proof of its divine origin, and its superhuman adaptations to the deepest wants of men, than its ability to heal the broken-hearted, and dry the mourner's tear, this alone would have proved that it came from a living God, and this would have amply vindicated the declaration of our Lord, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

May it not then be said, that the words which Jesus spoke, when the vision of his fearful and shameful death upon the cross, dawned with frightful distinctness upon his sight, have had, and are daily having a wonderful fulfillment. May it not be said, that the steady onward progress of Christianity itself during the centuries; its connection with the broadest civilization, the best literature, the noblest art, the purest forms of government, with the most useful philanthropic institutions, and in fine, with the most valuable influences which exalt and adorn the social state; may it not be said that all these patent and palpable facts of history have verified his words?

May it not also be said that the fact, that individual men of all nations, ages, circumstances, have been drawn to the cross of Jesus, to find in the great truth of atonement by that sufferer for human

guilt, a source of hope and pardon, and peace, when burdened with a sense of sin, and a fear of retribution, which was to be found nowhere else, proves that those words were not an idle boast, but that there is a power in the cross of Christ to save men from their sins? And may it not be said, that the equally well attested fact, that since the world became a place of sin, and sorrow, and pain and death, nothing has had such power to comfort the sorrowful, and take away the fear of death, and give men the power of heroic endurance under every form of trial, as simple faith in a crucified Christ, equally verifies these wonderful words, and establishes the truth of this prophetic declaration?

And if so, who then was that Being, who eighteen hundred years ago, declared, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me?" Who was that Being whose cross of agony and shame, has thus become a throne of triumph and of glory? Who is it, who has thus drawn all men unto him? What other sufferer has ever exerted such a power? What other sacrifice has had such a wondrous efficiency? Is not "the broad bright signet of divinity," thus stamped upon the person and the work of Christ? And may we not say, as we contemplate this whole history of the death of Christ, his own

prediction of its result, and the wonderful fulfillment of that prediction for eighteen hundred years, may we not say in the words of the venerable Synod of Dort,* “Wherefore we justly say with the Apostle Paul, that we ‘knew nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified; we count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, our Lord,’ in whose wounds we find all manner of consolation. Neither is it necessary to seek or invent any other means of being reconciled to God than this only sacrifice, once offered, by which believers are made perfect forever. This is also the the reason why he was called by the angel of God, JESUS, that is to say, SAVIOUR, because he should save his people from their sins.”

* Confession of Faith, Art. XXI.

A LIVE COAL FROM OFF THE ALTAR.

BY CHARLES S. ROBINSON, D. D.

“ THEN FLEW ONE OF THE SERAPHIM UNTO ME, HAVING A LIVE COAL IN HIS HAND, WHICH HE HAD TAKEN WITH THE TONGS FROM OFF THE ALTAR.”—ISAIAH VI., 6.

If the Rabbins are to be trusted, Isaiah was of noble lineage and high consideration in the nation. They tell us his father was own brother to Uzziah, the then reigning king. But Jehovah is no respecter of persons. This nephew of a monarch must be instructed in the true majesty of the one Monarch of heaven, ere he could be suffered to go on His errands to the children of men.

In this vision Isaiah looked upon that awful form of Deity, seated in glory within the mysterious recesses of the Holy of Holies. Around Him were the seraphim, waving wings of flame, singing a responsive song: “ Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.” At this, the brave prophet was thoroughly subdued And even as with rapt spirit he looked upon the

scene, the foundations of the edifice seemed to move, and the clouds of incense came rolling into the room. This proved too much for his endurance; he fell on his face in the depths of irrepresible emotion. What he thought, he tells us in his cry: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

We raise this question—Just what was it that agitated Isaiah in this way? The words here translated, "I am undone," are rendered in the margin, "I am cut off;" and the Septuagint version gives them, "I am pierced through." This feeling of the prophet, therefore, consisted in a conscientious and poignant conviction of sin, produced by the sudden and overpowering exhibition of God's holiness. But why does he specify his *lips* as being the admitted seat of his uncleanness? All the seraphim were singing with their lips; that alarming word "holy" was on each lip that sang. That was what startled him. He stood in his own way; he was so wrong that he could not join them in their music; he was so wicked that he could not worship; he could only cry, "Woe is me!"

Plainly the time has come now for a provision of

help. Isaiah can go no further alone. The supreme moment is reached when human weakness will have to be supplemented by divine interposition.

At this instant, the spectacle changes rapidly. Thus far, one would suppose that the exhibition had been constructed in entire neglect of the man, or in unconsciousness of his presence in the edifice. No allusion was made to him by word or gesture. A grand out-gleam of glory was flashed into view; but no one intimated that this human being standing there had anything deeper of personal interest in it, than if he had caught a glimpse of it alone, coming by accident to the discovery. But the moment he is prostrated in his shame and contrition, there starts out towards him a marvellous series of recognitions. Then it is that we find out the whole vision has been designed solely for him in person.

What is done is this: one of the angelic beings, who had been standing and singing beside the throne, now at perhaps some unperceived signal from the King, left his place swiftly, advancing directly to the prophet: "Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo,

this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

The teaching of this part of the rehearsal, therefore, has but one possible meaning. It all refers to the method of relief, proposed for a sinner's cleansing and resultant pardon. We must be slightly precise; for there are just three thoughts suggested in the verse, and we may take them up in turn. These namely :

I. THE SOURCE OF IT IS DIVINE—It comes from the throne.

II. THE NATURE OF IT IS SACRIFICIAL—A coal from the altar.

III. THE APPLICATION OF IT IS SOVEREIGN—A seraph brings it.

I. Few words will be necessary to show that the relief offered the prophet here was divine in its source. It came directly out of the very centre of that supernatural glory of God.

It is noticeable that not one effort, nor even a semblance of an effort, was put forth in his own behalf by Isaiah. In the frantic outcry of his soul —“ I am undone”—he throws up even the hope of any deliverance whatsoever. He proposes no compromises; he offers no engagement of reform. Nor is he urged to any. He is not told that he has so

much as another chance. Not a single question is put for him to answer. He entertains no purpose to dispute the conclusion reached. He simply lies on the ground helpless, leaving his helplessness, if anything, to cry for him.

Moreover, the relief must come as the accusation came. Up to this moment in his history Isaiah never had been aware of the fact that he was so thoroughly unclean in the sight of a holy being like God. The new standard of his estimation was found only in the infinite purity of that King he saw, whose praise the seraphim were singing. It must never be forgotten that genuineness of conviction of sin is to be distinguished from mere natural remorse at failure, from ordinary compunctions of conscience, from sudden shame at discovery, and from righteous alarm at peril, by the plain *direction* it takes and the standard of reference it announces. If it be true repentance, it will say with David in an unmistakable confession: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight; that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest."

Let us get this point clear, before we go any further. It will serve our purpose exactly to trace out this experience of a royal sinner, whose sin was

so conspicuous, and whose repentance was so much to our edification. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." Now some would say, perhaps carelessly, here was an unauthorized discrimination ; David had sinned against Uriah, and against Bathsheba, and against his own manhood, and against that whole realm he ruled, by complicated crimes of murder, falsehood, adultery, and impious presumption. Not against God, and against God "only," had he done his great wrong. But true penitence erects a true standard ; it is intelligent as well as self-abasing. David knew whom he had offended. Through and through the concentric circles of his lofty responsibility, his conscience led the way to the innermost one of all. He had broken God's law. Full before the undefiled glory of a holy Jehovah, he seemed quite to forget, for the time being, everything else except what God must think of him.

So always: a really repentant sinner will feel as if his guilt were all lying in an unparalleled enormity of aggravation. He has transgressed a law that is right ; he has outraged goodness that is limitless ; he has rebelled against an omnipotence he cannot now face ; he has slightingly turned away an affection which is invaluable ; he has wronged a beneficent friend, who never did him any wrong ;

he has mocked a monarch, established in authority, without a shadow of extenuation or excuse.

With this kept in view, there is no room for argument. Human deliverance must come forth from the throne. Isaiah, crying there, in all the abasement and abandonment of his shame, had no need to thank even the seraph with the coal of fire in his hands. The coal came from the King. The altar was the King's. The seraphim were only the King's messengers. Every step in the scheme of human salvation, from its earliest beginning at the new birth, to its latest triumph in the new song, is God's. "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord." When the redeemed in heaven sing their highest songs of ascription, they can say no more, no less, than this. John tells us in the Revelation what he heard behind the veil:—

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

II. So much seems established, then; all pardon for transgression in the present, and all promise for

the future, are the free gifts of divine grace; their source is in God. The plan for our salvation is altogether his: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

But now just what was it exactly, which the seraph brought to this weeping prophet? That leads us on to our second subject of consideration, namely, the nature of the relief proffered to a penitent sinner. We shall find it to be an atonement, made by *sacrifice*, to satisfy the requirements of God's broken law.

In the vision of Isaiah, we are told that one of the attendant seraphim left his post beside the throne, and flew out over the space beyond the Holy of Holies till he reached the altar in the court; from the midst of its glowing embers he took with the tongs a live coal; this he came and laid on the prophet's mouth.

Now I think that expositors have wasted a great amount of valuable space in trying to show what altar in particular the celestial messenger visited. There were no coals to be found upon that one which stood in the Holy Place; it was for burning sweet incense of gums and spices. And there is no sense in the action whatever, if all that the

seraph fetched was a small fragment of odorous resin, symbolic of worship; the soul is not saved by worship. The live coal came from the altar of burnt offering. Victim after victim had flamed on that structure, life for life, in solemn service of sacrifice, atonement for guilt. The fire once kindled had never been suffered to go out. It had been lit by a miraculous flame from heaven at the first, and the Levites guarded it from extinction, as they would their lives. That coal was part of a sacrifice. When laid upon Isaiah's lips it meant an atonement for sin. God sent him no unconditional pardon, for all he was so humble and penitent before Him. God never pardons anybody unconditionally. His law demands satisfaction. He has not ever in even so much as one case relaxed its claims. He sent us Christ, His Son, to die and become a sacrifice, so that we might have something outside of ourselves to plead.

The name of Jesus is the only name given under heaven among men, whereby we may be saved. He takes his appellation of "the Lamb of God" from His priestly work of sacrifice. All those old bloody rites of Moses referred directly to Him as the victim on the altar. Everywhere in the dawning of that early dispensation there was a star-light

of Christ, who was to come at last in the full noon of gospel day.

Look, for instance, at the ancient institution of the annual Day of Atonement. On other occasions inferior priests slaughtered the animals and prepared the offering. But upon this anniversary, the high priest alone officiated. And all the drudgery, clear down to the lighting of the lamps and the kindling of fire for incense, a long work of preparation requiring sometimes more than two weeks to complete it, so the Rabbins tell us, was undertaken by him. That day was a day of days to him. He was to put aside his jeweled mitre, and wear none of the so-called "golden garments;" even his shining breast-plate of precious stones had to be relinquished, his ephod and his bells. Clad in simple linen, a linen girdle, a linen coat, a linen mitre, he alone entered the Holy of Holies, he alone laid the victim on the coals, and he alone led the people's scape-goat away into the wilderness.

All this was typical of the solitary errand of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, what garments of glory He laid aside, when that day of days came in which He was to minister at the altar of solemn atonement! There was no remission of sins without sacrifice, and He came to be the ministrant to offer

it. He needed no help; He allowed no interference. One altar, one victim, one priest—this was all that was prescribed, all that was permitted.

Did you ever ponder the pertinency of the fact that none among all the disciples of our Lord, not one of all the adherents who followed Him, was permitted to die with Him? He was condemned as a rebel; yet not a single man or woman who succored Him or sustained Him in that so-called insurrection suffered for it. A few of His friends talked about it; one of them said outright on a conspicuous occasion, "Let us go and die with Him;" but none of them ever did. The meaning of this is very plain. It was an infinitely wise precaution against mistake. It would, without a doubt, have misled some feeble minds, if by any accidental confusion another name had been coupled with His in the dying hour on the cross. It was just as well that all those disciples forsook Him and fled. One priest, one Lamb, was all that was needed.

So then, as we come back to the story we are studying, all we need to keep in mind is the fact that Isaiah thoroughly understood and accepted the significance of that coal which came from the altar. It was the offer of a sufficient sacrifice, a

full atonement for his sin. It is gross beyond description, to reason that his lips were to be burned with the fire, and so his suffering was to count as a sort of penalty. What folly to think malefactors may be cauterized into purity! Pain may be part of what we call consequence of sin; but pain has no reckoning whatever among the pleas God receives from the penitent. We cannot say to Him, "Forgive me, for I suffer;" but we may say, "Forgive me, for the Lord of Glory suffered once in my stead."

Furthermore: it is in this particular that the earthly career of our Saviour possesses such power. It is not His correct life, so much as His sacrificial death, which sways the race; it is not so much His pure moral maxims as it is His vicarious obedience unto law; it is not so much His creed, as it is His cross. Just now, within a little while, some one has said—and it surely is the more wisely said, because he who said it spent some invaluable years in denying it beforehand: "Unless the Apostolic language does transgress not only every rule of literal construction, but all parallels in the latitude of metaphor, it certainly declares Jesus to be a Redeemer in some sense which no notion of instruction, or of exemplary character, satisfies." To be

sure it does; and that sense is very clear to one who is willing just to receive it. Jesus Christ is our Redeemer not by setting examples of human greatness before our eyes, but by bearing our sins upon the cross, and becoming our substitute before the divine law.

III. So we come naturally on to reach our third matter of consideration, mentioned in the beginning. The application of atonement, so that any given transgressor may receive it, is sovereign on the part of God, and wrought entirely by free grace.

Such a lesson is taught us here in Isaiah's vision, by all the circumstances taken together under which that prophet was addressed when he was joyously informed by the mysterious voice of the seraph, that his iniquities were removed and his sins purged. The relief came from the altar. The angel brought it. The King sent the angel. With absolutely no intervention of his own whatsoever, immediately upon the acknowledgement of desperate necessity, the full supply of help arrived. The remarkable characteristic of His pardon is that it was provided graciously by an agent entirely external and independent of Himself. And the grand lesson for us now is, that for any convicted sinner relief is found through sovereign intervention of the Spirit of divine grace.

For you are carefully to remember that the altar had stood in the court all the time, just as it stood now ; the coals shone upon it, the tongs were close by. But there was no being to furnish fire to Isaiah ; there was not one person in the universe to whom he could look ; there was not one whom he could impress into service ; there was not one on whom he had any possible claim. A single coal of sacrifice would help him ; but not unless it could be brought to touch his lips ; and so, for all the good that wonderful altar could do him now, it might as well have been kindled on another planet as out there just within reach. For divine intelligence only to provide our atonement, and store its treasury of merit full in sight of human necessity, would be nothing less than cruel mockery. It must be sovereignly applied to each soul.

Isaiah was like a culprit at the bar, whose case is closed. The judge, the advocates, the jury, do all the talking. The condemned prisoner seems to have no chance. Nobody shows any attention to him. His day is over. He can only groan, wipe his eyes, stand up, and take his sentence. If there be even a whisper concerning pardon, pardon lies somewhere out in the dark. That can come from some unknown executive alone ; officially, the court

is incompetent to touch it. The man is given over to the sheriff's hands; there remains only a fearful looking-for of judgment. He cannot go for forgiveness, even if it be in store for his needs.

Pious Wickliffe used to pray:—"O good Lord, save me *gratis!*" And Christ does save *gratis*, if He saves at all. Sinners must be content to owe everything they receive to the recognized grace which shines on Jesus' forehead and warms in His heart.

THE WITNESS OF JESUS TO HIMSELF

AS SEEN IN

SOME CONTRADICTIONARY PHENOMENA OF HIS LIFE AND
CHARACTER.

REV. LLEWELYN D. BEVAN, LL. B.

“I AM ONE THAT BEAR WITNESS OF MYSELF.” JOHN
VIII., 18.

The conflict of Christianity with its enemies is ever being narrowed to the question of the person and nature of Jesus Christ. Within the church the subject is almost decided, and universal Christendom is agreed as to the doctrine of the divinity of its Lord and Saviour. Discussions both in this country and in England, which were carried on pretty hotly within the memory of many still amongst us—which proved that those who agreed to accept the New Testament as an authority in doctrine and practice were even so lately divided as to the nature of our Lord, issued in a separation of

communion and fellowship based upon differing views as to the Divinity of Christ. Such discussions and separations have in their final outcome proved that the essence of Christianity is the person of Jesus. Unitarians have either gone much further than their early position and proceeded almost to an entire abandonment of Christianity, or else have returned to hold views not very easily distinguishable from those usually accounted orthodox, and many, I believe, are only waiting for some kindly and fraternal overture from the orthodox party to give up any distinctive and heretical opinions, and reunite themselves with the vast majority of the church—an overture too grudgingly given or too long delayed by those on our side. The church sees as she has never seen, not even in the critical time of the Arian controversies, that Christ is the centre of Christianity, and *that* Christ the incarnate Son of God.

The same fact is seen in the methods by which external attacks are made upon the Christian verity. It is not only by friends, but chiefly by foes that the life of Jesus is written. In America, in England, in Germany, in France, the most popular works which issue from the modern press are those which deal with Christ's history. The critic and the friend

alike seek in the life of Jesus for the proof of Lordship, or the evidence of delusion. What did Christ say? what has Christ done? what was Christ? These are the subjects of modern debate. Men have largely forsaken ontological and metaphysical arguments for and against religion. The prophecies and the miracles are alike felt to be secondary subjects of discussion. What think you of Christ? is the question of the apologist and the infidel. This is the chosen field of conflict. We know no other place where we would so gladly contend. The issue here is vital. Victorious at this point, all the rest is easy. Beaten here, the Christian church expires.

In this line of argument it is very natural to ask what is the testimony that Christ gives of Himself? how does he present Himself before us? Let us place ourselves in the position of an intelligent and inquiring observer of our Lord's time. What would he see? How would Christ appear to such a man?

We propose to point out certain paradoxes in the appearances of Christ—certain striking contrasts, almost contradictions of consciousness, phases of character and conduct, which arrest us by their incompatibility, and we shall endeavor to find some explanation, some reconciliation of these differences

—as judged from a merely human stand-point—these contradictions of feeling and action.

I. The first fact which presents itself before a candid observer of Jesus is *His sublime self-consciousness of divinity*. Compare Him with all religious teachers, with the prophets that went before Him and the holy men who have followed after, and we find Him dreaming no dreams, seeing no visions. The ground of His teaching, of His life, is not a mission upon which He has been sent, but a consciousness which is strong and vivid within Him. We never hear Him say “Thus sayeth the Lord.” The prophet’s formula, “The word of the Lord came unto me,” never falls from His lips; but instead of this He speaks forth a sublime claim; He uses language, not the servant’s, but the Lord’s. He feels that He is no creature but the very eternal Son of God.

His disciples are stricken with sorrow as they forecast some swiftly approaching evil. In a mysterious way they recognise the fact that their beloved Master is about to leave them. Desolation already possesses their hearts, like a shadowy mist creeping on over a bleak and barren moor. Then He speaks to them, “Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.” “Show us, the Father and it sufficeth us” cries one of the

least faithful, the least hopeful of the twelve. Jesus answers "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." I am in the Father, and the Father in me," even that "Father that dwelleth in me."

Or again, in discussion with the Jews, we hear some of His claims to authority and power. "Even Abraham," He declares, "rejoiced to see His day, and he saw it and was glad." Wild words these seem to the scribe and the pharisee, and they answer, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham." Then Jesus replies, "Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am." Can words be stronger, more graphic as an expression of a consciousness altogether divine?

I am quite aware that there is the endeavor to diminish and to explain away by any device of criticism, and hermeneutic, the simple meaning of the words. There seems to be therefore, much greater force in some of the indirect words of our Lord as implying the mind that must have been in Him.

Take, for example, a saying upon the occasion already referred to, when He is consoling the hearts of His Apostles, and He refers not only to what had been in the past and what He was for them as the manifestation of the Divine Father but also to

what He will do unto them, and what He will be to them after He has left. They are indeed to lose Him; His presence will no longer cheer, His voice no longer teach, His hand no longer grasp them; but there is a Comforter—a Spirit of truth; and whether this Spirit, be Himself a personality, or a power, we need not now stop to enquire. At least the spirit was to be a Divine gift, the very fulness of God's own grace and might. In one place Christ says that He will pray the Father for the Comforter, but in another He declares that it is expedient for His disciples that He should leave them, for "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you."

What must that Being claim who declares that He will send God's Spirit to His disciples—the Spirit that broods over chaos, and a forming world of beauty springs beneath His spreading wing; the Spirit which strives with man for righteousness and truth, for purity and God; the Spirit by which all beings live? Who is He? Who, at least must He believe Himself to be who declares "I will send this Spirit unto you?"

We fall away from the awful form that towers before us in divine majesty, and we cry with bowed heads, Behold our God!

But now let us turn to another set of phenomena which present themselves in the consciousness of Jesus, and we observe in contrast, *His ceaseless subjection to God.*

A young man came running to meet Him, full of aspirations, hopes, endeavors for higher life, but with some vain conceit, and misconception of what is the essential nature of goodness, and what is man's true relation to God. "Good Master," he cries, "what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus disregards the question, and answers, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." The candid observer will not fail to recognize here the sense of a dependence on God. Although He said, "I and the Father are one," thus making Himself in the language of the Jews "equal with God," He also says "The Father is greater than I." He is the subject servant, the dependent son. "I came not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me," and where ever has any child of human sorrow, burdened by any duty and overwhelmed by storms of distress, cried with more submissive language, and with spirit of deeper self-subjection than He, who when the agony became of blood, and the wildest conflict was at its highest, prayed to the Father

that if it were possible the cup might pass from Him, "nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Who is this sorrowing, struggling, submissive one? Surely the man, Christ Jesus—the boy who had to be about His Father's business, and yet meekly bent Himself to the lowly lot of Galilean peasants and mechanics, and became subject to His mother Mary and Joseph the carpenter of Nazareth.

II. Not very distinct from this is a second series of contrasted phenomena in the consciousness and expression of our Lord. *On the one hand His pronounced self-assertion, on the other hand His humility and self-abnegation.* He appeals to no authority other than His own as the ground upon which He claims that men should regard and behold Him. Indeed He occasionally condescends to argue His work and teaching, by calling attention to the nature of His miracles, challenging charges against His own conduct, quoting the testimony of the Baptist, and even appealing to the reason and better nature of His adversaries; but for His disciples, and in respect to the future of His doctrine and His influence, He almost entirely limits Himself to His own authority and trusts to the personal hold which He may gain over man.

The *ipse dixit* of the ancient philosopher was never so powerful as the "I say unto you" of Christ. We first love Him and then we learn of Him. Faith in Jesus is thus a personal matter, and the logic of Christ's truth follows upon the lines of His person, character and work, rather than the mere formal necessities of our own intellect.

When He propounded His law upon the mount of Beatitudes which forever bears the name of the blessings that were the distinctive character of the discourse which He delivered, He contrasts the teaching of His ethics with the ancient law, even though that was divinely given, by the self-assertive words "I say unto you." True, He fulfils the law, and not a jot or tittle of it was to pass away; nevertheless His fulfilment of it is its virtual abrogation, and while He lifts it into the upper air of His own glorious conceptions of life and duty, it expires and passes away—all this on His own authority and by the might of His personal prestige.

What a significant scene is that where He upbraids the cities for their hardness of heart and for that unbelief wherewith they had rejected Him! Had not His most wonderful works been done amongst them? In their streets the blind had seen and the

deaf heard. They had beheld the wild demoniac, devil-torn, caught by the strong and gentle hand of Jesus and changed into the sane and quiet disciple and restored to the long desolated, despairing home. And yet, Bethsaida or Chorazin had not believed in Him, while Capernaum, exalted to the heaven, had given no regard to heaven's King who had appeared unto her with His wondrous works of love and power. These words are a wail. They are the cry of a man whose work has been rejected, and almost with the bitterness of a heart too conscious of its failure. Then, hearken to the words that follow, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." This apparently disappointed and rejected one speaks language so strong, so hopeful, so self-reliant, that for eighteen centuries the broken hearted and the defeated, the weary and the overwhelmed have listened to these words and felt their gracious meaning, and found in them a strong consolation, the upholding comfort of the Son of God. Man's confidence and joy, by these bestowed, have been the echoing confession of the ages, the truthful record of the human race to the confident self-assertion of Jesus Christ.

Another declaration of Christ concerning Himself is remarkable. From His disciples, He learns

how men misunderstand Him and His mission, Some say He is Elias, others, John the Baptist raised from the dead, others, Jeremias or one of the prophets. It is only a few who really apprehend Him, and can confess that He is indeed the Christ, the Son of God. And how calm, how resolute, how inspiring the words with which He makes reply to all these misapprehensions, and confirms the faith and rewards it, when His chief Apostle makes confession of his Lord! This Teacher, Whose teachings men cannot learn, this Leader whom men will not follow, this Lord whom men will not obey says that "upon this rock" He will build His church and "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." What church? The little company of ignorant fishermen? What church? The living band of fearful yet ministering women? Surely not! A church, which before His mind lifts itself up unto the heavens, and is established with a power as of God Himself. Is this arrogance? Is this egotism? It is the sublimest that has ever been revealed to man. If true, the noblest; if unfounded, the wildest and most vain. And may we not enquire, as we pass, whether any one to-day, with eighteen hundred years and more between him and these words of Christ, can charge them with false pretentiousness or would dare to say that they were too proud, too strong?

But what is the contrast here? Turn to it; observe His humility and meekness. His life was simple. The child of a carpenter's wife, He is fitly born in the outhouse of an inn. Round Him circumstances are mean and lowly. His mother's offering at His birth is the simple offering of the poor. His lot, though indeed of royal line on both sides of the family in which He dwelt, was that of the lowly Nazarene. It is not difficult to imagine the scenes of humble life in which He moved—the house, the simple life of the Synagogue school, the lowly, if not impoverished condition of an artizan's career. Clearly, He received no education which was markedly above that of His companions, for the people ask when they see Him, “whence hath this man letters?” He came out into public life as a person soon noted and famous, but His career opened to Him no affluence, no place of earthly dignity and ease. “Birds have nests and foxes have holes, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.” He who could bless the bread and feed the gathered thousands knew the pangs of hunger, and the only treasury where He could find the tribute money was the fish's mouth which by accident, or providentially, as we more rightly would speak, held the needed coin. His lot, if not that

of poverty and humblest life, was certainly one of humiliation and ignobleness.

The moral characteristics of Christ's character were the fitting counterpart of His humble life. "I am meek and lowly of heart" He says to those whom He invites to find rest for their souls. How truly does this describe Him! The youth in whom the struggling Divinity already breaks forth and who has awakened to the sense of the Father's business, is willing to go down to that lowly home of Nazareth and be subject to His parents. When He becomes the scoff of sinners, the mockery of cruel men, how patient, how submissive! "He is led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers He is dumb." No word of scorn, no proud casting back of defiance; nothing but the closing prayer of the breaking heart, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." So much has Christ become identified with the gentler and meeker sides of human conduct, that it has become fashionable to charge Him with teaching a virtue that is pale and cloister-like, wanting in the sterner and more active qualities which are needed to complete and perfect character. He who claims to be everything and to have all power is also the shrinking, modest, humble hearted one

who flees from the public eye and retreats to desert places and the mountain solitude.

III. A third set of contrasted characteristics is *the infinite power exhibited by Jesus, combined with a most noteworthy meekness and helplessness.*

Mark the works of Jesus! How easily they are all performed! The master hand is seen in the very facility in which it moves. The strivings of the demigod as he lifts up enormous masses and crushes into shape the rude stuff upon which he toils, is not so impressive as the ease with which the God labors and makes all things to bend submissive to the very motion of His will. "Let there be light" speaks the voice of God, "and there was light." He opens the windows of heaven, and a race, all but one family, are overwhelmed in the deluge.

And is it not thus that Christ works? It is the storm upon the lake of Galilee. The little boat makes but poor way against the breaking waves and before that driving wind which comes sweeping down some gully from the heights upon the Eastern shore. The rowers toil and labor, but the sea breaks in upon them and the boat is filling, and they begin to sink. Where is the Master? Asleep.

Calmly reposing after a hard day's work, He rests upon a pillow in the hinder part of the little vessel. They come to Him; they awake Him—"Master, Master, we perish" they cry. He rises, speaks to the winds and the waves, and there is a great calm.

In His dealings with disease, the same infinite power is exhibited. A touch upon the eye-lid of the blind pours the light of day upon the darkened orb. A word to the fever, and the pulse beats with moderated flow through the veins of the cured one. "Be clean" He says to the leper, and the loathsome disease is gone.

See yonder demoniac, naked, with long hair unkempt and matted, horrible in jesture, with naught upon his torn body but the rings of the chains wherewith men have bound him. He is flying towards the tombs, when a word from Jesus arrests him. He stands and answers the question which the Lord puts to him. Another word from Christ—and behold the man whom multitudes dreaded, who had become a wild beast in his terrible bondage is "sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind."

In all this one is impressed by the sense of reserved power which Jesus always exhibited. Men often work at their full stretch. Another pound of strain

and the grasp must be relaxed; another ounce of weight and we must let go. But Christ labors with a vast amount of strength behind Him. He is always easy in His work. The greatest effect makes no call on Him, because infinity seem to be the source from which He draws.

Hence there is no wonderworking in the life of Jesus. He is no thaumaturge, no magician. There is no array of scenery, no parade of dress, no pomp of staff and signs and portents. Compare Him even with the other workers of miracles whom God has sent to man, and they *summon* the power—He *exercises* it. There is force in His very look. His magic is divine.

How remarkable the contrast to this which we find, in what I cannot describe better than by the expression, the helplessness of Jesus! Take the supernatural out of the history of Christ, and how feeble He everywhere manifests Himself! He who can bless the bread and make the narrow furnishing for a simple household the superabundant feeding of five thousand is familiar with hunger. The poor supply His needs. He has to escape for His life from the mob who pursue Him. He is invited as a guest to the house of the Pharisee, but the common courtesies of strangers are denied Him.

“Give me to drink,” He says to the woman at the well-side, where faint and weary He had sat Him down to wait until His disciples should procure refreshment from the village hard by. With His hand upon a universe that yields before the minutest swaying of His will, He is almost dependent as a child and fragile as a tender woman.

IV. There is nothing in the consciousness of Jesus which is more noteworthy than the *complete absence of any sense of sinfulness or moral defect*. The history of the religious life of the leaders of human thought, and especially the founders or reformers of religion has been marked by seasons of a profound sense of personal unworthiness and demerit. The apprehension of God in His holiness, the perceptions of the claims of the Divine Law intensify the human consciousness of distance from God and departure from righteousness. Hence a personal religious experience with its specific relations to sin and holiness, (the overcoming of the one, and the attainment of the other), occupy a large part of the history of religion.

But there is no trace of such experience in the case of Jesus. He may grow in favor with God and man; He may perceive the work which the Father gave Him to do; He may advance in the

development of His mission ; but there is no penitence ; there is no struggle to overcome sinfulness within Him ; there is no dejection, no sudden awaking to a consciousness of God's claim ; there is not the shadow of the sense of sin. And yet, "sinlessness" does not describe it. It is "separation." There is an absolute incompatibility to conceive of sin finding harbor in Christ's nature, or being manifested in His life. His life is pure as the angels. He is holy as God is holy. If you search deeply into the Christian thought concerning Jesus and sin, you will find that it has come almost to the point of being unable to attach the idea of sinfulness to the Lord, any more than one would attach such idea to objects which had no moral nature at all.

Even the unbelievers make but a feint of discovering sin in Christ. It may be hinted with a leer, but the hint reveals the impurity of the critic, not the sinfulness of the Christ. Make the worst of some vague expression or obscure event in our Lord's history, and you only plunge yourself into a critical problem of inconsistency and unlikelihood more perplexing than the sinfulness itself. "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" asks Jesus of the ages. "I find no fault in Him" reecho well nigh

two milleniums to the declaration of the Roman judge. ✓

Now, turn to those scenes of transcendent mystery in Christ's history—the temptation, the garden agony, the passion on the cross, the death; and what in the presence of sinlessness do such expressions signify? He is tried, but surely, what does temptation mean if the nature is not one that can be tempted? Where is the force of example, of encouragement, of sympathy, if the words of satan were like idle winds softly whispering upon adamantine rock? And then, why the shrinking from the cross? Was it mere pain that Christ would avoid? Did suffering which some rude robber would bear with composure, overwhelm this Son of God, until He trembles, shrinks and bursts into a sweat of blood? Thousands of martyrs—little children and gentle women, have borne gladly and almost with desire, sufferings far greater than those which Jesus seemed to endure, and beneath which He quailed and groaned so that the earth was shaken, and cried out that He was forsaken of His God. Innocence, sinlessness does not know such fear as that. Here indeed, is the most pronounced contradiction in the paradox which we explore.

V. The following contrasts which we note are to be regarded as belonging to all the aspects which we have considered, rather than to be set apart into a class by themselves. We refer to the *infiniteness* which marks so much of what Jesus did, while on the other hand there are *limitations* by which He is ever environed. There are no bounds to His being. Not that the spectator feels this in any one particular mode of Christ's life and action; but let him begin to define the limits of Jesus' character, to find that which lies beyond Him, and then all becomes vast, indefinite, illimitable. I think we may say that nothing in Christ's history is itself infinite, but it runs at once into the infinite. Hence men do not out-grow Him. Each age studies Him afresh with ever widening sweep of the scope with which He can be regarded. His words grow in significance. The more they are studied the more meaning is found in them. This age, which is most fertile in the investigation of the sayings of our Lord, has more than any age proved how the horizon of Christ's doctrine widens and advances. His works, even the least, give the impressions of being nothing but the beginning of energy, and like the doings of God Himself, "there were the hidings of His power."

And yet this infinite Being is limited by all the limitations which environ us. He is an infant, a child, a youth. He grows to maturity. He is hungry, thirsty, faint and weary. He seeks for human companionship; yearns for sympathy and to be understood; feels the bitter hostility of enemies, the cold neglect of the unfaithful, the weakness of His disciples, the treason of the betrayer. His words and acts are those of a God, and yet He is flesh of our flesh, a man among His fellows.

There are two scenes in the life of Jesus, which bring out into very startling contrast these conditions of character and mind which we have briefly indicated. Both of these events took place in the Garden of Gethsemane upon that eventful night so fraught with issues of eternal moment to our race. In the first scene, we find our Lord addressing to His disciples words of comfort, of strength. Look at Him so calm, so sublime, so helpful. He cheers them as a friend would cheer his friends, who mourn his departure upon some long journey, to him all familiar, to them all unknown. He promises them Divine strength. He will ask for it—nay He will Himself give it. He is the heroic, the Divine—the very Son of God, with all the calm majesty, the unmoved strength of the King of angels and of

men. But now the scene is changed: He has left the main body of the disciples, and with a few chosen ones moved forward into the deeper recesses of the garden, and there He prays. But where is the calmness, the strength? It is an agony that we behold. Strong cries that He may be saved from what is coming, tears, groanings, the sweat of blood attest the bitterness, the conflict, the almost conquered One, who so lately was self-reliant, all Divine. Where in all literature is the artistic contrast so striking? Remember it is only the simple record of the unlettered who tell the story as they knew it best.

But what is this? Lights approach and a band of armed men come forth, led by the traitor, commissioned by the priests. Judas knows the place, and he has bid them search amid these shadowy retreats, for the Lord has often come here for prayer and meditation. But there is no need for searching. He steps forth—a moment ago the man of sorrows, bound down with some tremendous weight, crushed by the burden, shrinking from the event—He steps forth, we say, and lo, the whole band of soldiers fall back and down upon their faces, smitten by the exceeding glory and majesty of Him whom they would take. Yet He yields to

them. They seize Him. Apparently, some hold Him and are leading Him away. Meanwhile, in the confusion, one of the disciples has smitten an attendant, and wounded him in the ear. "Suffer me," said the Master, courteously requesting the guard to loose Him, and putting forth His hand, He touches the ear and it is healed. Then gently submitting to His captors, He is led away.

But observe that act. The Man whose very form fills the guard with dismay and strikes them to the ground, whose calm declaration is that He could presently summon an angelic army to His rescue (and no one doubts it) with quiet courtesy requests the soldier who holds Him to relax his grasp, that He may extend His power to save and bless. How we change in all this life from strength to weakness—from the conscious God to the smitten humble man—until the eye looking with no light but that which shines for human vision, is dazzled and confounded, and knows not whether those records be only the wild phantasms of a fevered dream.

It is at least a series of phenomena that demand explanation; or the greatest miracle of the world's superstition is the undoubted fact of the narrative itself. Dismiss it? You cannot if you would be

scientific and know. Happy are you if you understand it and believe !

Now, such a remarkable history demands some explanation. Let us briefly consider what has been advanced concerning it, and what is the true significance of this witness.

It is said that the Christ is the out-growth of the ages, and that He may be called a *natural product* ; that the forces of all the preceding generations gathered in Him, and that Eastern and Western races with their religions, philosophies, national systems, laws and customs centred in Christ and produced the ideal man. But we ask where can be found the elements in any one of the human forces as known to us in the time of Christ, from which the nature of Christ could be compounded. And if one Christ could be produced, why not others ; why not a community which by natural out-growth was developed in any nation or among all nations ? The fact is, whatever Jesus was, whatever His church became, it was in absolute contradiction to what was found in the society around. Can Christ be formed out of what Pharisaism or Sadduceeism or, indeed, Judaism itself is known to be, not only at the time of Christ, but at the period of their highest, best development ? Will the oriental re-

ligions produce the Son of Mary, the Son of God. Out of Grecian art and culture, or out of Roman militaryism and law can a satisfactory genesis be made for Jesus of Nazareth? The question answers itself, and the form of our Lord still rises, unique, unclassed, ungenerated, sprung from no human source begotten by no human father, whether for physical constitution or not, certainly not for moral and spiritual character. There may be indeed a scene, an arena for that life, a fitted lap on which the infant Jesus may repose, a virgin's womb which He may not despise, and so there may be a circumstance of the world and humanity in which the life of Jesus may rest, and in which it may be transacted, but the power that produces, that generates, such power as shall satisfy the scientific condition of the problem cannot be found in that ancient world though we search from the remotest Britain to the farthest India.

Another explanation which has been given, is that this Christ of the Gospel is the ideal of an individual mind—not a natural product, but a *literary product*. This history is a romance; the grandest triumph of human imagination, but altogether fictitious, created by man, an image, a thought, an idol. If so, wonderful creation! How

unlike all else that literature can afford! Where are the rules of keeping, of harmony, of equipoise? Where is the humanity? And if an imaginative monster, how is it that He is still so human, so real? The fact is, to make Christ the creation of man is to raise difficulties still greater than those presented by the theory that the history is real. With a word only we need dismiss this suggestion (which probably has long ago been dismissed from the critical mind, except as a vague mental influence which weakens faith and destroys enthusiasm). If a romance, who was the romancer? If a creation of the human mind, where is the creating mind? Show him to us that we may at least find there our divinity and adore.

A third theory that we must note is that Christ was a retrospective development, or as we may say a *mythical product*. Some individual of great power and wisdom, of noble elevation, of moral character, and deep spiritual insight did exist, who reformed religion, founded a school, and after death was slowly changed by the loving regard of his followers into the heroic and at last the divine. The histories of Christ which we possess, it is said, belong to a late period of the Church; in some cases perhaps a century elapsed between the death of Jesus and

the publication in their present form of some of the Gospels which we receive, and in that time tradition had grown, and love had become an enthusiasm and discipleship a worship, and Christ was made God with all God-like qualities and powers intermingled with the simple story of His human career.

It is impossible to deal with such an opinion within the limits of this discourse, but it would have been uncandid to have passed over this most generally received theory of the life and history of the Christian Lord. We make, however, one remark concerning it which seems to us absolutely fatal to this hypothesis, and our critics themselves shall be our judges.

Granting, that in the course of a century such a myth could have arisen, how is it that we have the supernatural, unique, Divine nature of Jesus Christ not only hinted at or supposed, but clearly asserted, made the basis of finished argument, the ground of a philosophic presentation of Christian doctrine which remains until this day the inspiration of all the philosophic systems of the Christian verity, in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans which no man whose name is worthy of record in historic criticism has ventured to impugn, as a work composed, pub-

lished almost within a generation from the time of Christ by one whose life must have overlapped that of our Lord, and who in every way had reason to refuse the results said to be the growth of the myth tendency in the Church, but who clearly held and taught them, and left them on record in gravest, soberest, most significant words? As long as the epistle to the Romans remains a study for the church, the mythical theory is the wildest hypothesis of criticism run mad.

That Christ was Himself a deceiver or an enthusiast, may be urged as an explanation of the Christian history on the platform of a third rate infidel hall, but scarcely needs notice here. The moral impossibility of such a resolution of the problem is invisible only to those who themselves are so immoral as not to recognize virtue, or so ignorant as to be unable to weigh evidence as to the consistency of character, and the essential keeping, which belongs to human life. A knave ought to recognize that Christ was truthful, and the fool would he open his eyes might see that He was perfectly self-possessed. Had Christ been a deceiver He would have summoned the aid of physical force, which was at one time quite at His command. Had Christ been an enthusiast, the dominion of the

sensuous which always accompanies religious enthusiasm, strong enough to produce epochal effects, would have been manifested in His life. But He is pure as the dew drop which reflects only the sunshine and the sky. He is gentle as the infant. He is best described as the Lamb of God.

We have left ourselves but short time wherein to present that theory which alone satisfies all the conditions of the case, and although we must go to Holy Scripture for it (for which we humbly apologise to our rationalist friend) a philosophic necessity of fitness and the only fitness compels us to accept it. Guided, therefore, by scripture we affirm that in these phenomena which we have observed, *we find the evidence of a personality altogether unique.*

There are contrasts, even contradictions, and yet there is a unity about the person and a consistency in the life that make us feel confident of the truthfulness of the record. All things fall into their place, when we are taught by the word of God, that this person whom we seek to understand is at once the Son of God and the Son of man. He is Divine, and all the Divinity of His being is thus accounted for. He is human, and all the humanity of His lot is wholly explained. Christ is then God *and* man. His Divinity is not the incarnation of the oriental

faith, wherein the divine is manifested by the human—really Divine but in human form. This is no apotheosis where the man is lifted up to the Godhead and endowed in some mysterious fashion with the qualities of God; ceasing to be man and becoming a divinity. It is not the humanization of a God when the Divinity ceases to be Himself and takes on the qualities of man; but it is pure and simple Incarnation. Christ is God, and Christ is man—God in man, God with man, but ever essentially God *and* man. If this is so, the phenomena are explained, the life is consistent, the character is confirmed.

Then again the *origin of this unique personality must be traced to God*. It is clear that the human race could not produce such a being. No generation, no development, no highest striving of highest man could ever eventuate in this unique Son of God, Son of man. Even were the ideal conception possible, which is doubtful, a person who had formed the idea could never have realised it. It must have remained a phantom of his imagination and left no trace behind except the record of the baseless fabric of a dream. But with God all things are possible, and scripture is at least consistent and philosophic, and is the best solution of the problem yet presented when it declares that “God sent His

Son," that "He that cometh from above is above all."

And finally it follows necessarily, and scripture declares it, that the *object for which such a unique being was sent by God into the world must have been to accomplish some special work.*

That Christ should have been a mere teacher would not require a nature both divine and human, for God could have inspired a man and taught him what to say. If Jesus had come only to incite men to higher endeavors and quicken them to a nobler life, this also He might have accomplished had He been only man. It was for other purposes than teaching and inspiring that God became man.

Then again God could not have become man for His own sake. He can require nothing which He Himself cannot supply. Were He dependent even on an incarnation He were no longer God.

Christ is evidently also not the first of a new species, for He has not been followed by another like Himself. He is without family before or after, and as He came from God, so He also went to God.

His mission therefore must have been for man, and evidently, He came that some new relationship or some modification of an old relation should be

formed between God and the human race. The original relation was that of union in innocence, afterwards broken and lost by sin. Christ came therefore either to restore the old harmony or to create a new. In some way, Christ came to deal with sin, to remove it, to destroy it; to form afresh the sacred bond which sin had broken and to place man in such a relation to the Divine Father as if there had never been and as if there were not the fact of an outraged law and a fallen humanity.

Such an object is declared by Scripture to have been sought by God in the gift of His Son, and such an object is seen to be the only sufficient end for which such a personality as we have endeavored to describe would be suited and designed. The nature of Jesus and the work of Jesus are thus found to be in harmony, and Scripture not only explains, but has all parts of its explanation harmonious and consistent with each other.

Such, brethren are the phenomena of Christ's character, and such the only explanation which perfectly suits the facts. We are bound as rational men to receive that theory which will most completely resolve the problem. That difficulties remain, perhaps forever beyond the scope of our powers, is only to say that the problem belongs to

human nature without for a moment considering that it contains also elements which are divine. But the very incomprehensibility—the residuum of the inexplicable—only adds to our sense of truthfulness. All life is mysterious, and the best science must leave something at which reason halts and faith alone surmounts. The unknown point of union between the divine and the human is no reason for our refusal to accept what we can see of the human or of the divine. “The Incarnation is a mystery” says the unbeliever, “and I refuse it because it is mysterious.” Then let him refuse to pluck the flower and rejoice in its fragrance, to reap the field and make merry in the harvest. Let him deny life and being, the birth of the child, the generation of the ancestor. Let him refuse to feel if he can stay his feelings, to think, if he can quench his mind. The mysteries of growth, of life, of consciousness—ourselves—are everywhere around within us. The comprehensible may be the sum of practice which the school-master sets upon the schoolboy’s slate. The life which God gives is everywhere unknown, unknowable. We are mysteries, for we are the children of God, not self-begotten, not man-created, and the very fact that we are balked in the complete answer to the enigma of Jesus, is the best

proof that He too in His infinite being and incomprehensible personality is from God, and as such is to be devoutly and faithfully received by men.

Here, then, would we apply the argument which we have pursued. Christ is Divine, and so, His work is Divinely accepted and will be Divinely perfected. Dare you refuse it? Can you reject? Christ is human, and so with all the tenderness and pity of a brother He has taught and labored and died for you? Will you turn a deaf ear to the tones which hide their glory as the words of God, in the pitiful gentleness which reechoes the broken accents of our own human speech? Christ's work is no conjecture. He was no mere guesser at the universal mystery, the result of whose speculations we may balance and refuse. Christ's work is no experiment, one of the ways found for living, one of the ventures of life among the manifold efforts of even the best of men, to be at best ended in disappointment, or to be regarded only as the best which men can do. But the work of Christ is a fact—a fact humanly environed, but made Divinely complete. And when the evidences of the apologist fail to convince your intellect, and the eloquence of the preacher fails to touch your heart; when the wild strife of sects and schools disturbs and be-

wilders you, and when the world allures and the tempter hurries you to fall, then, my brother, turn to the Lord Himself, interrogate Him, examine Him, listen to His words, follow His steps, gauge His character. "Behold the Lamb of God," and find there that highest evidence, receive there that completest proof which is found nowhere but in Him who alone of men can say "I am one that bear witness of myself."

THE CONDITIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE.

BY E. H. CHAPIN, D. D.

“AND THE SCRIBE SAID UNTO HIM, WELL, MASTER, THOU HAST SAID THE TRUTH: FOR THERE IS ONE GOD; AND THERE IS NONE OTHER BUT HE; AND TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART, AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING, AND WITH ALL THE SOUL, AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE HIS NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF, IS MORE THAN ALL WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES.”—MARK XII., 32, 33.

The Scribe by whom these words were spoken, had asked Jesus the following question: “Which is the first commandment of all?” the answer was that “the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength * * * and the second is like, namely this. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” You observe, then, that what the Scribe says here is substantially a recapitulation of what Jesus said. And I proceed at once to remark that

these words describe the conditions, or, in other terms, the Root and Branches of Religious Life.

Notice, then, that at the basis of the conditions specified in the text there exists a single Principle. That Principle is Love, "the Love of God," and all healthy religious life, in whatever form expressed, grows out of this. I do not assert that what is commonly called "the Religious sentiment" is itself Love. That instinct which moves in the soul of man, that mysterious gravitation of our nature to some unseen source, is itself vague and indefinite. It may lie almost dormant. It may be roused by fear. It may traverse the circle of abject superstition. But I speak of this sentiment in its *highest* development. And I say that in this condition it manifests itself not as a response to an arbitrary commandment, but as the intelligent and willing surrender of our nature to infinite Goodness. Thus its life-root is Love. True, it is blended with fear,—that "Fear of the Lord" which "is the beginning of wisdom." But that kind of fear is synonymous with reverence. For there are two kinds of fear. Both of these were illustrated in the incident of the storm on the sea of Galilee. When the wind arose and the waves beat into the ship, the disciples were smitten with terror, and cried, "Master, carest thou not that

we perish?" But as they witnessed the majesty that stilled the tempest and bade the sea be still, "they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, 'What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'" In the one case the fear was timidity and the shrinking of the heart from danger, in the other it was the fear of awe and reverence. And this last kind is perfectly consistent with love,—indeed it is an exalted expression of love. I repeat, then, this Love is the Root of true Religious Life. Thus much for the sentiment in itself.

We may now proceed to consider the conditions, or operations of the sentiment. Following the statement of the text, I remark that these conditions, or operations, are four fold.

I. In the first place, I observe that this Love is impelled by the *heart*. Now this may seem to be a mere truism. For it is simply saying that Love to God must be an exercise of the affections. Nevertheless there is something here for us to consider. I proceed therefore to say that Love to God really *is* an exercise of the affections,—our *human* affections. It is no vague emotion or constrained posture of our nature. How many are there who lay hold of this requirement with clear perception? "Love of God," "Love of Jesus," these are very

common expressions. But are they not often unreal and formal expressions? The thoughts of men passing into the region of religious ideas, pass into a region of indistinctness. When the soul glides across the boundary-line of its mere earthly relations and intermingles with spiritual things, a strange light shimmers around its way which transforms and sometimes distorts its conceptions. Now I need not tell you that I reject at once the dogma that "where mystery begins religion ends." For indeed all that lies beyond our senses,—yes even within the sphere of our senses,—is involved with mystery. Especially in this region of religious thought and religious life are there facts that far transcend our capacity. The ways of Him with whom we have to deal, are *not* as our ways. Yet the things beyond our sight may stand not merely in imperfect apprehension, but in false relations to our minds. Thus there is no genuine grasp of them. Religious truth is not tested and held like any other truth. Religious affections have not the free, spontaneous movement of other affections. And so religion itself is switched off the track of common life, and shut up in consecrated times and places ; religious hours are divorced from other hours ; and a religious man does not stand in our thoughts as equivalent to a thoroughly true man.

Remember, I am not stating what Religion really *is*. I am not describing its legitimate fruits. But I am telling you what comes of making Religion and religious things *unreal*. Keeping in view this point, I say that while God is incomprehensible He is, nevertheless, Real, and one result of the Revelation which He has given us is to make known His Reality. That Revelation is on His part, a condescension. He draws near to us that we may draw near to Him. He addresses those conceptions with which we are familiar, as a standard by which we may hold communion with Him. Therefore the call to love Him appeals to no artificial emotion, but to our natural affections. He not only lays upon us a command. He sets before us those qualities which are worthy our highest love. He gives us the Image of His own perfect Love in Jesus Christ. It is the sentiment of our common humanity that responds to the parables of the Stray Sheep and the Prodigal Son. Moreover that our love to God is to be the exercise of natural, human love, is made evident by the Second Commandment, which we are told is *like* the first,—“thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” The nature of the love is the same in the one instance as in the other.

I affirm, then, that love to God is *natural* love, in

kind not differing from love to man, only differing in its object. Springing up in the *heart*, like any other worthy love, only as it rises in this direction it is glorified by that object. Now how does all other love spring up? Why, by the necessity of its nature. Not of constraint, but of free will, from the heart. It cannot be forced into existence, it cannot be made to order, whether the summons come from policy or from terror. In obedience to the tests of a conventional piety, a man may say that he "hopes" he loves God, he "trusts" he loves God, and make spasmodic efforts to realize the feeling. But just analyze such statements as these. If love to God is real love—love of the *heart*,—see how strangely they look. "Hopes?" "Trusts?" Why, does he not *know* whether he loves his children, his friends, his benefactor, or some truly excellent character? And is the feeling towards God which he hopes, or trusts he has, anything like this warm, vital natural affection?

And that love which he bears to his children, his friends, is it a feeling which he *forces* into existence, or trains by unreal postures of the soul? Or does it run like a living stream from the *heart*? Can we imagine one, in the ordinary relations of life, going through such a process as he does in the professions

of a conventional piety? What is love to God? It is love of infinite goodness, of perfect excellence. It draws peculiar sanctity from its object, nevertheless love to God is not an arbitrary or unnatural sentiment. After all, it is with this *heart*, this human heart of our's that we must love our Father in heaven, this human heart, centre of strange emotions, bound about with dear relationships, throbbing with untold joys and sorrows—these weak, imperfect hearts of our's—we can only consecrate their best energies, and lift them up to their highest Ideal.

This, then, is the first condition of Religious life. “Out of the heart are ‘*all*’ the issues of life,” its best things as well as its worst things. It is the mainspring of all good work. Only that is well done which we love to do. It has been truly said, that ‘no amount of pay has ever made a good soldier, a good teacher, a good artist, a good workman.’ Pay as you will, the goodness of the thing depends upon its being done for nothing.” Real excellence is neither bought nor sold. That comes only of freedom and love. Thus with Religion—its vitality comes from the loving heart.

On the other hand, we may be sure that the object of true Religion presents that which charms and wins the human heart. No arbitrary command-

ment can do this. The attraction exists in the very nature of Him whom we are required to love. Therefore to lift this requirement out of any arbitrary interpretation, it is necessary that the Revelation of God Himself should shine upon us. We must extricate ourselves from all mere human teachings, and come face to face with Him in Jesus Christ.

And now let me ask whether this first of all Commandments finds any response in *your* hearts? Or does it stand before you only in the hardness of the letter? Do you realize who it is requires your love? Look upon the world around you. Consider its vastness, its stupendous forces, the mechanism of the heavens that silently moves above you. And then think of the unbounded goodness that flows into all these things, and flows forever, binding constellations with their "sweet influences," and feeding the wild-bird in its nest. This goodness thus manifest above all, though all, in all, does it not unseal the spring of deep, spontaneous love in your hearts?

Or, as I have said, stand face to face with the Revelation of God in Jesus Christ. That mercy and tenderness which walked among men, and pitied our infirmities and bore our sorrows, which found no sin too dark for its reconciling light, no sorrow too heavy

for its consoling grace, do not our hearts respond to this? Surely, then, the Commandment which the Scribe re-affirms in the text, is interpreted in our hearts.

And this is the only principle that can overcome evil, that can absolutely conquer and uproot evil. The infatuation of a wrong affection can be destroyed by nothing but a mightier love. The drunkard will not be reformed by denunciations or warnings. He must be lifted above the fascination of his appetite, he must be carried away from his estate of baseness and of bondage, by some wave of moral impulse sweeping him onward with the enthusiasm of trust and hope. The daughter of shame is unmoved by anathemas, or by rhetoric. But the mysterious depths of that heart may be touched by some holy love, it may be the glimpse of a mother's face in heaven, mightiest of all by the conviction of a God who does not abandon even the outcast.

Go to a man whose soul is pickled with avarice, and exhort him with some fine moral lesson. Do you think that will lift him out of those sordid grooves, and set him in the Kingdom of Heaven? No! nothing will do this but Divine Love descending into his heart. Yes; the christian doctrine of regeneration is an irrefutable doctrine. The essence of a

man's nature is his love, and that can be changed only by a change of *heart*. This is the way in which God overcomes our sin, our selfish will, our hate, and lust, our pride that mounts so high, our appetites that sink so low. He has revealed Himself. His boundless mercy in Jesus Christ. Alas! when we blind our eyes and will not see, and stop our ears so that we cannot hear.

II. Another condition of religious life is love of the *soul*. This is a state of holy sensitiveness and refinement. All our instincts become right. Our souls shrink from sin as the eye-ball shrinks from a speck, or a touch. I will not assert that that man has no religion at all to whom goodness is a restraint, and who is kept out of sin as a child is kept out of the fire—by a fender of terrors. But surely he has a little more than a form of religion. Is it not so,—when his caged heart keeps fluttering after indulgence, and through his brain there runs a troop of epicurean conceits, even though his external life is decent? His name may stand in the register of some earthly church; but, reckoning not how much grace he may gain but how much indulgence he must spare, how is he fitted for that invisible church, that celestial city, whose crystal walls and golden streets are only symbols of intrinsic purity and holy love?

Moreover, true religion is not a fitful emotion, lifted up and carried forward only by waves of excitement. I am not going to discuss the efficacy of what are called religious excitements. Souls may be borne in them, but cannot always live in them. They may be means of grace with some—with many. But those who affirm this as a matter of their own experience, should not disparage that steady, gradual growth which,—“first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear,—” unfolds in the silence of the soul, nor have they any warrant to challenge the genuineness of this spiritual life in others, because its expression is less demonstrative, or rather, less vociferous than theirs.

My brethren, when a man loves God with all his soul, religion is, so to speak, the *genius* of that man. It is the entire sweep and tendency of his nature. In such a case, let us not attempt to gauge the depth of that soul's life by the mere agitation of the surface. The technically religious are not sure to be the most religious, nor,—as in foreign cities we sometimes see, the words “English spoken here,”—may we expect to see some legible sign which says, “Religion professed here.” The true religion of the soul is an atmosphere,—it appears in the aspect of a life,—even as an old poet has said, com-

daring the expression of some one's face to the milky-way,—it is “A meeting of gentle lights without a name.”

He who loves God with all his soul, asks not whether the public eye is upon him. Everywhere, always, he *feels* the Infinite Presence, the Infinite Purity. His conscience is always tender clear down to the roots, and always growing. It is with conscience very much as it is with education. At school or college, the young man erects the frame-work that ought to set him up in life, to be continually educated. But he leaves school, or college, and his education stops. He seldom looks into a book, or consults a principle. He keeps just enough education to read the newspapers and to cipher by. In this way, I fear, many people treat conscience. They store up some excellent maxims, and at times, perhaps, get a genuine religious shock that, for a while, opens their eyes to spiritual realities. But conscience does not grow any more, nor expand into larger vision. Life becomes routine, and religion stagnates on a dead level.

The truly religious man grows in the life of conscience as the scholar grows in the life of intellect. As the one proceeds from the alphabet to the *Principia* of Newton, and onward to the sublimest dis

coveries, so the other perpetually ascends into the region of spiritual truth, grows more conscious of sinful habits and motives, receives fresh inspirations of duty, and holds personal communion with the Father.

III. Again, the Religion whose root is Love, is in vital alliance with the *understanding*,—with the enlightened mind, with clear, free thought. Time will not permit me even to touch all the suggestions which arise on this point.

Let me observe, however, that while it is true that the privileges of the religious life do not depend on the degree of intellectual capacity,—while it is true that these are for the humble, the ignorant, the way-faring man,—nevertheless the intellect testifies to the love of God, and the more we know, the more fresh and real will our religion be. There are some who, apparently, assume that religion and reason are antagonistic. They virtually tell us that the heart, the emotions, the sensitive soul, are on the side of Faith,—but the brains are on the side of scepticism and denial. Now,—to say nothing of the somewhat scant modesty of this assumption, or of the fact that a large amount of brain-weight in this world *has* worked as religious and Christian force,

it seems to me a strange thing, to assert that two factors of our nature harmonize, but the third is antagonistic. My hearers, we may be sure that is no religious truth, which will not stand the test of all our research. We may be sure that, in the sublime unity of God's universe, *all* truth will turn out to be *religious* truth.

Again, there are those who, because human reason is evidently limited, regard it as spurious. So they turn to "authority." They deny the right of private judgment. They affirm that God has given to one man a faculty with which He has not endowed any man,—infallibility. They shrink from clear vision, and actual contact with spiritual realities. They get at these only through forms and sacraments—through agents and intercessors. I do not disparage, much less would I revile, the help which men find in ceremonials. But when material symbols are made to stand in place of the thing signified,—when they balk the soul's blessed privilege of open vision, and instant contact with the Truth and the Life,—then we cannot too strenuously assert that Christianity is a religion of freedom and of thought. Then no ranks of saints, or martyrs, or Madonas, or aught else must take the place of "the one Mediator between God and man.

the Man Christ Jesus." Then no creed, or catechism, or church, or priest, or Pope, must bar our communion with the Head of the Church, and "the One God and Father of all" Whom He has revealed.

There is an affected humility which says "God does not need our knowledge," to which we may reply in the words of Robert Hall, "No; and he does not need our ignorance either." There are infidels *in* the Church, who by the timidity of their faith, betray a lurking scepticism; there are those who shrink from discoveries, and regard intellectual culture as a wintry atmosphere, clear, but cold, under which the soul lies frost-bound, and the sensitive graces of piety droop and die. Why, if vital piety shrivels as the mind expands, and flourishes best in the shadow of ignorance, in strict logic, the more ignorant we are, the more pious we ought to be, and moral excellence is in inverse proportion to knowledge. Now, in order that we may love God, we must know *why* we love Him. Without this there is no steadfastness of conviction,—no real grasp of the mind's object. If the branches of religious life develop in harmony, the intellect will serve its true end in proportion to its light and its expansion. Everywhere it will find incentives to the love that kindles in the heart, and suffuses the

soul. By its action the flame of religion will become a clear flame, "like unto glass mingled with fire." Thus exercising every faculty of our nature as God's gift,—by the free, yet humble use of the intellect, ever discerning new instances of a goodness,—let us love Him "with all the understanding."

IV. And "with all our *strength*." The strength of practical action; the strength which issues from completeness. Thus shall we have a religion of our entire nature,—heart, soul, and mind precipitated in love to God, and as surely as it is impelled by love to God, appearing in love to man.

But is not the idea of religion often associated with weakness? Is not the religious man regarded by many, as a man of softer clay and more watery essence than other men? At least he is not considered to be the sort of timber with which to build a thorough working-man of the world. If he does plunge in among the realities of common life, it is inferred that he must deduct fifty per cent from the sterling value of his religion, or alloy himself with hypocrisy. But I hardly need reply to this, that there is nothing in this world so mighty as a genuine faith working by love. There is nothing like it to make a strong generation of God-fearing, God-loving,

man-loving men. And yet this mistake has been made for a reason. It has arisen not because religion itself is weak, but because we have so weakly laid hold of it. Yes, one reason why the world is so contemptuous about "piety," is because so often the leaves of profession cover such meagre fruits of practice.

As to religion itself, it stands upon immovable foundations. It answers to wants and aspirations that are inherent. It expresses facts that are as real in human consciousness, and as significant, as to the eye of science, as is the fossil in the rock, or the star in the sky. And however cunningly assailed, or for a time even violently suppressed, these primary interests will continually assert themselves.

In the village of Ementhal,—so runs the legend,—there was once a celebrated convent, which has now entirely disappeared. Among other things that convent possessed a golden organ, which stood in the church, and was played during service. At length the convent was attacked by enemies, and the monks, in order to save the precious organ from the grasp of their assailants, dragged it away and sunk it deep in a marsh. They never recovered it. But the story goes that the golden organ is there still, and that once in every seven years, at mid-

night, it rises out of its hiding place, and through its golden pipes there peals out wondrous music,—soft breathings that sweetly stir the night air, and mighty waves of sound that roll and echo through the woods. So this great organ of our spiritual nature, buried in many corruptions, and at times suppressed by denial and by doubt, ever and anon rises from the depths, and sends out its notes of primal truth, of freedom, and righteousness, and love,—its breathings of Divine aspiration.

And as to the Religion of Jesus especially, its witness is the fact that the world needs it. How much it needs it! This Religion of strength; this Religion of the husk made Religion of the grain; this Religion of good words made a Religion of beneficent deeds; this religion of sect and party made a Religion of Christian brotherhood and world-wide help. For this Religion of Jesus, which has so often been feebly and falsely rendered, is, in itself, a religion of power,—a power that *convinces*, not that drives,—that wins the heart, the soul, the mind, and binds them together and makes them strong.

Jesus here pronounces a commandment, but a commandment that carries its persuasion with Himself, and in Himself. He says: “Love the Lord thy God,” but at the same time he reveals the glory

and the excellence that claims our love. Is it not a reasonable claim? Does it not involve our truest life? Can we deny it? Shall we reject it? What else, then, is there for us? This love of the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, "is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Possessing this,—living this,—under whatever form of Christian action, under whatever name of Christian faith, we are "not far from the Kingdom of God."

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